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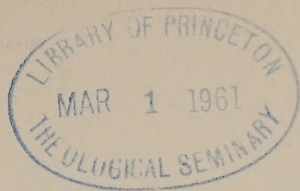




The  
Dimensional Structure of  
TIME







# The Dimensional Structure of TIME

TOGETHER WITH

*The Drama and Its Timing*

BY  
IRVIN MORGENSTERN



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# *Of Action and Time*

Thinkers of all ages have attacked the problem of time, and scarcely yet to any altogether satisfying conclusions. Most generally the assault has been upon time as appearance. And certainly the ephemeral character of time, persisting by very reason of ceaseless change, lends it every appearance of appearance. The earliest recorded observations upon the nature of time were of time as thing, but little need be said about such supposition today. One would have supposed that more recently, and especially since general acceptance of the theory of evolution, somebody would have elected to treat of time as process. Perhaps Bergson did so, I do not know, I never could understand his lyrical, attenuated outpourings; the little I was able to force myself to concentrate on seemed to get nowhere. The holist hypothesis of Jan Christian Smuts, a recognition of process, little considers time; and yet implicit in every observation of this eminent soldier-statesman-philosopher is an assumption of time as necessary medium of process. But is that all it is?

My own approach to a theory of time lay through the drama. I took anxious hold on the problem of action, only to discover that I had the problem of time by the tail. I couldn't let go. Now, I do not believe that time has been wrestled with intently from this angle ever before. At the

same time experience convinces me that here is the rewarding attack. Will you check with me?

Time—what is time? Apprehensions of time trace back to earliest childhood. I still recall the occasion for puzzled wonder that here now is bright day, the morning sun streaming in at my window while I sit up in bed rubbing my eyes; whereas I know—with certainty know that only a moment ago it was night and me playing thrilling games with the children of visiting friends of my parents, while the grown-ups from an adjoining room tried vainly to restrain our exuberance. How had I got here, out of my starched clothes and between the white sheets? Is it—is it tomorrow? And my late newfound playmates, do they then know that it is tomorrow, or are they still fast in last night waiting for me to come and rejoin them? Indeed, are they in being at all, or wiped out completely along with my presentments of them?

There was, too, the cycle of the seasons. Christmastide and priceless presents—a sled; snows, colds and sore throat—castor oil—darkness early. Presently St. Valentine's day and colored comics, more fun to give than to receive. Later, sassafras tea . . . April fool! . . . Soon a grateful change from scratchy flannels to downy cotton underwear. After long waiting, my birthday—a whole year older now, almost grown up!—three or four or five. And presently the glorious sense of summer with long days out o' doors; Fourth of July disputing with Christmas the distinction of the best day of all the year; perhaps to the country with my mother—the trainride sickens me; sunburn and prickly heat. . . . In almost no time the older children are preparing their return to school, so big, so self-important. Dusk comes earlier, shortly after supper; nights are cool and mornings frosty; a golden glow of turning leaves, incense of burning leaves—cod-liver oil to take. Presently Thanksgiving and its turkey, maybe a basket of speckled quails. And once again the excitement of

Christmas—what will Santy bring! . . . Thus recurrence, and again and again recurrence, and always the same order of recurrence, till recognition is forced of the cyclical pattern of the calendar: one complete calendar cycle signifies a year.

One is taught to read the clock face at an age of five or six. And to interpret the lithographed calendar that hangs on the kitchen wall. "Thirty days hath September," this doggerel needs be reduced to memory. Thereafter come few self-conceived notions about time. So obvious has it been made that time is mechanical, due to "the motion of the sphere" or some such master clock, that no occasion can be found for wonder to be told a little later that the beat in music too goes by the name of time. One accepts this cynically refusing to credit that there can be any possible connection between minutes and hours and days and months, on the one hand, and the lilting melody of music. A child is kept much too busy learning insignificant generalities to find time to puzzle such things out.

Everybody takes an interest in the drama. At some time in his life most everyone writes a play. In my own case there came no overpowering urge to write until after I had put in much intensive practice composing love letters. SHE thought these beautiful, the best of fine literature. At that time I was disposed to agree with her in everything. I was on the road selling goods, already a few months married, when first bitten by the bug to write a play.

I told my wife at once upon arrival home. She was delighted. She confided that for long she had secretly nursed the notion that fame and fortune awaited us writing for the stage. She was sure, and I was sure. In perfect confidence I sat me down to write.

Of course, I knew a little something of the drama as who does not, drama being of the substance of our lives. But I fancied then that I knew more than now I can be certain of.

I prepared myself with paper, pencils, sat down and set to work. But it wasn't long before I became aware that something more is needed in the way of preparation besides pencils and paper and a resolve. I found myself in a quandary as how best to organize my story. I conceived that I might learn from others, masters of the craft, and so I took to reading plays, and criticisms of plays, and treatises on dramatic principle.

I am not a stupid person, or at any rate such is my belief, but I must confess that my perplexities only deepened. The authorities I studied quoted Aristotle, one and all deferred to him, yet each went on to embroider his few words, and to the contradiction of one another. Aristotle employs terms, "beginning, middle and end," "katharsis," and others, which each immediate authority defined differently or else failed to define at all. Instead there was manifest a tendency towards a loose multiplication of terms, and still without clear definition. It has been borne in on my notice increasingly since then what a very human failing it is to give a name to what one sees but little understands, and so presume that the matter is disposed of.

But at that time, seeking guidance, it was necessary to accept some authority, and since all acknowledged Aristotle I elected to do so too. I pondered over the meaning of "the beginning, middle and end"; so obvious the meanings of these terms, so obvious the ideas behind their obvious meanings, that it became altogether obvious something cryptic must be intended. I couldn't puzzle it out. Not for years and years. But we haven't nearly come to that.

Archer argues with Brunetiere over a definition for action—all are agreed that action is the essence of drama. Brunetiere identifies action with conflict, and Archer gives a qualified assent, but himself prefers as more general, more



valid, its identification with crisis. His argument sounds reasonable to an impatient student and I am prepared to accept.

And so the months pass; the play grows and develops. I steal every moment I can spare from the road to work at it—some that really can't be afforded. Hurrying home from a short fill-in trip I learn that my wife's present address is the hospital; the stork had outraced my train by two hours.

I hold in my arms my firstborn. The moment is tense, I am thrilled. I feel myself one, and the child one, with the bloodstream of our line. In that moment I am no more my own individual self than I am my father and grandfather and unnumbered generations before me. And the little bundle I hold in my arms is the earnest of untold generations to come.

The nurse speaks: "Look at him, the proud father! As if he had done it all!" My wife smiles up from her pillow wanly: "I had something to do with it too, I guess!" And she holds out her arms for the babe.

That night, solitary in my bed, I have time to reflect. Here had been action, surely. Life! Not a mere imitation of an action but the genuine article. . . . Or was it action?

In the dark I recalled the scene to taste once more the thrill which had been mine. What a red and wrinkled face the little beggar had! How weak its tiny wail! My wife, brave, making light of her ordeal, how proud she looked! Her brown hair curling against the whiteness of the pillow, eyes shining, smiling. More than a bit jealous too, wished to take the child away from me. But natural enough, no doubt, after carrying in distress for months and bearing it in agony to resent my easy claim. . . . I must try to match her devotion.

Here had been crisis, certainly. And yet hardly an action. Action is foreshadowed. This day has seen a crisis in

that joint career which is my wife's life and my own. And a crisis too in the careers of our respective stocks. Surely a major crisis, the initial one, in the child's career.

Initial crisis in the child's career? . . . Clearly the special character of this event in my wife's life and my own is an initiation too. We are ushered into parenthood. New responsibilities to assume. New conditions. No turning back ever again. Distinctly a facing forward upon a fresh level of experience. A crisis then would seem to mean a beginning. Not at all a culmination, a climax to action, but an event the utter contrary to this. Indeed, for me the crisis of this day has not even led to action but to reflection, probing thought.

And yet there had been action too. That thrill which I experienced knowing the child and me as marchers in the procession of the ancient blood, here surely was the sense of nothing less than action. No crisis in this, nothing initial and just begun, rather the full surge of a mighty tide in our veins, at its highest reach right now in this fresh generation, but still and forever rising. Here had been climax. . . . Yes, irresistibly, here was action.

But what then is action? How to know it unfailingly? How reconstruct it for use in the drama? It is not crisis—Archer is misled and misleading. It is not conflict but harmony rather, betokening a sense of cosmic oneness. Only, perhaps this sense of unity is to be heightened, action heightened, by deriving it out of conflict. . . . So just what is action? . . . For days and weeks I ponder. If I can only extort this secret of action I shall have everything I need!

But my reflections are not immediately profitable and I put them aside to concentrate on the final draft of the play. I finish it and send the script off. My hopes are high, and my wife's hopes, as we put it in the mails. Three weeks to wait. Back it comes with a kind but chilling note. And so

off again, and returned again. And off, and off, and off! But always it comes back.

The producers of those days found time to be gracious while still saying No. Winthrop Ames was generously encouraging; William A. Brady was most kind; Harrison Grey Fiske advised turning the material into a novel: the characters were excellently conceived, closely observed, only the action was too slight for purposes of the stage. Already I was prepared to accept this. Not to make the play over into a novel, for I had no mind to attack a new form until first I should have mastered the drama; but now I could understand that the action was slight. Through study and practice I had learned much more about the drama than was evidenced in this first effort. Already the theme for my second was working in me. I packed the script away.

I was aware that I had not yet firmly grasped the secret of action; but then neither had Archer, neither had Brunetiere, and these were accounted authorities. I felt that at least I knew better than they, for I knew what it was not. Trusting that I should unfailingly recognize action when I saw it, and certainly its lack, I started to plot my second play.

Things were not going so well in business now. Not merely because I was devoting material time to other matters, but much more serious, my interest and enthusiasm had been deflected from the selling of merchandise. And general conditions too were not too good. However, I was sanguine of the prospects of this second play, and my wife too was sanguine. We could smile at the irony of coincidence: a second child was coming.

Another crisis in our lives. There had been many such since I began to write, yet there was but one action, and it incomplete until I should succeed. A single action compounded of recurrent crises. Is action generally patterned

on recurrence? Intuition swiftly whispers, Yes! A phrase out of Nietzsche echoes and reechoes: "doctrine of eternal recurrence."

I hurry the play, what time I can divert from selling, and I find I can steal time freely now since business is bad. I am anxious to get the script off and read and accepted before very late in the fall: the arrival of our addition is scheduled for October.

Recurrence, eternal recurrence! I finish the play and send off the script. I can measure with pride how vastly superior it is to the first: I have grown. Back it comes. I send it off again and take stock of our now slender resources. Back it comes again. A series of sendings, each time with hopes freshly laundered and starched, and the never-failing counter-rhythm of a wilting return. Meanwhile our second youngster has arrived with insistent demands.

In agony I seek seclusion to thresh matters out with myself. My family—my accepted responsibilities. . . . If only the play—! Should never have hurried it so. . . . No ifs, this can't go on. Two children now looking to you. And a wife. Submitted cheerfully to progressively lowered living standards, unfair to ask her to dip still further. . . . The play is good! . . . But not good enough—forget it. Must get back to selling. In earnest. Build up again. Make good living if you cut out nonsense. . . . It's not nonsense, I can write! . . . Can sell, too, but not do both. Must have assurance, affairs at a crisis. . . . Crisis?—recurrence? Action is recurrence, a crescendo of recurrence! . . . Here, you, concentrate on this mess you've got your family into. . . . Action?—Recurrence?—but what then is recurrence? Rhythm, cyclical rhythm—in time. Cyclical?—hm-mm-m, action a cyclical pattern? Is it possible that action possesses definite patterned structure? Every action unfailingly of the same basic pattern, call the terms of its structural elements vaguely: be-



ginning, middle and end? And each of these elements likewise a structure of beginning, middle and end? And perhaps such lesser parts again? . . . Should such pattern belong then to time itself or only to our artful representations of an action in time? Hm-mm-m, time does manifest something of pattern, there's the sequence of cause and effect. Sequence?—pattern?—rhythm?—structure? Can it be that time in music, the meter of verse, is of the selfsame order as world time, living time? . . . Time! What is time?

Baffled in my efforts to focus singleminded attention on the economic problem, I discuss with my wife that night what is to be done. She is as unwilling as I to admit to defeat in my attack on the drama. Success, surely, lies just ahead. Only, our needs are immediate. We finally decide on a modified program, not so ambitious: short stories and possibly a playlet or two as a last fling. In pursuance of which we break up our home, she and the children move in on her mother, while I take train for New York.

Beyond this point my personal story is scarcely pertinent. A further series of encouragements, of hopes high mounting, and of sickening disappointments. My fling was over, I had to get back to business, provide for a family. I had learned painfully that it does not do to give divided attention to one's bread and butter, that way disaster lies. I made determined effort to put every creative idea of the drama out of my head.

But still a philosophic interest persisted. For fifty years I have pondered the problem of action. And of rhythm. And time. Has time a definable structure? What is the nature of time?



## *Of Time and Action*

One may perform experiments in time upon himself. No particular equipment is needed, nothing specialized beyond the mere attitude of inquiry. For time is the possession and the experience of all men, of the hewer of wood and the drawer of water alike with the poet, the statesman, the scientist. Indeed, time would appear to belong impartially to every form of sentient life, to the dog, the reptile, the mollusk, no less than to man. But yet it is hardly thinkable that the times of such lesser creatures are one and the same with ours. At least their concepts measuring the manner of their approach to any experience of time must differ from ours. What is time to the oyster? But more immediately, what does it mean to man?

Perhaps our least involved category of time is that of duration. Whatever else we may find to say about it, time endures, and this would seem to be its unmistakable character. So let us first of all examine our concept of duration.

Inferred is a universal continuum stretching without break between a sometime past infinity and an infinity of the future. Quantitatively duration should be infinite, eternal, a ceaseless transition possessed of a character surprisingly like that we read into the motions of the heavenly bodies. Nor is motion at all conceivable apart from some interval of time.

So that duration would fairly seem to be a condition of motion; but yet not the only one, three-ways extended space is obviously a further measure of motion and equally its condition. To conceive motion complete then and deal with it effectively, there arises the logical necessity, until recently quite unnoticed, to link duration and space together under a single concept, that of one physical four-dimensioned continuum, space-time.

### *Space-Time*

We are given to understand that physicists are finding space-time a useful concept, wherefore to such extent is it valid. But anything beyond the most cursory consideration shows us involved in a serious dilemma in respect of it. We have assumed that space and duration are conditions of motion, yet on the other hand we find it needful to treat both as functions of motion. Without motion as antecedent we may not describe either duration or space at all. Now, I submit that no thing or process can be at once both condition and function of something else: it must be one or the other, or neither. Then which is prior, space-time or motion? The only possible answer is that neither is prior but that they are concurrent. Space-time is neither function nor condition but our mental abstract of motion. It represents motion's simplest, most objective attribute, its less than solid substance, an ether ponderable in precisely those respects in which motion is ponderable, and otherwise imponderable. Apart from motion space-time has no meaning. In our subjective experience it has no meaning. Subjectively we may not long hold time and space so much as linked together, since our intuitions of time are so intimate and personal, our sense of space being of something alien. The linkage is artificial; the two ideas tend still of themselves to pull apart. Nor is duration



at all an adequate description of time within subjective experience. For if we can have any experience of time it is assuredly of the present moment, yet our sense of duration upon this present moment is practically nil. Nor does duration in any way account for this present moment, or for any moment. It represents the mere quality of continuity, in time as in motion, extension itself and not its measure. It is certainly not discrete. Infinite in extent, it can have no unit other than infinity nor measure aught but one event, eternity. The present moment, if we will insist on such a thing, should be but a hypothetical point in the curve of one-dimensioned duration, without magnitude, without content or significance. Thus any idea of simultaneity would be quite absurd, co-existence without meaning, recurrence utterly unthinkable. But of such events we have a plentiful experience and so must cling to our belief in them, even to the point of rejecting duration as the informing principle of time. It may well be—it is—one principle, one category in a complete description of time, and that is all. Time comprehends duration while yet it is something more besides. So what and how much more is time than mere duration?

### *Relative Time*

Early in the period of my private inquiry into the nature of time popularizations of relativity theory which I might understand began to be broadcast. I was interested. I conceived that here might prove to be something pertinent to my own painfully evolving thought. But the more I was able to gather of relativity the more perplexed I became. Not because it is so deep, rather because it appealed to me as naive. Its initial premise seems to be that time is individual to each observer, subjective to him; and I grasped at this eagerly since it accorded with the position on which I was then

moving. But the relativists employ this concept in effect only to destroy time, declaring that such discrete character can not possibly be in the nature of time, one-dimensioned and structureless, rather more likely of multi-dimensioned space; so that if it is obvious of time, it only goes to show that time must be indissolubly fused with space; that there can be neither time nor space distinct one from the other, but instead, a single four-dimensioned continuum, ultimate and irreducible, to which the observed condition specifically belongs. I could not then and can not now follow such reasoning. Space-time I had already conceived only to reject: it should prove a satisfactory instrument in dealing with motions objectively but never with subjective events in time. I was disappointed in relativity. Until, wondering at the acclaim greeting the theory on every side, I resolved to grind myself a pair of relativist glasses and fit these to my eyes. Thereupon I was much impressed by what I saw. But yet what emerged was never objective space-time but reciprocal or relative time. I'll let you too have a peep through my glasses briefly to regard relative time as reflected in human affairs, beyond which it can hold no abiding interest for us.

Your time is your possession while my time is mine, while yet both times are coexistent magnitudes within one wide-embracing body of time which we durst call our period in history. Thus your time will touch and influence mine at many points, and scores on scores of other men's times as well, while mine reaches out to inweave with the times of a few of these besides the times of scores of persons quite untouched by you. And the times of these reach out likewise—in an extension quite other from that of duration, please note—to innumerable junctures; so that were we to consider the fabric knit of all such interlacings we should find this earth girdled by it many times, wrapped tight; and some such idea as this we intend when we speak of the period of our

times. Relative time permits us individual lives and experiences and histories, threads in the fabric, which objective time would altogether deny us, and in this and other respects it well invites our favor.

This relative time is conditioned by events, so that with the coming of dawn we may know the beginning of a new day, or with first appearance of spring flowers recognize the recurrence of a new year, or from a downy development on the cheek of youth augur approaching manhood. Thus it is plainly a succession of discrete yet related unit intervals, whether days, months, years or generations. Within it are related and ordered all events common to any community of time, and so it offers a standard of reference, a common calendar or clock, whatever you choose to call it. Simultaneity is its accepted norm, coexistence an essential extension, recurrence an event so clearly foreseen as to be lost to wonder. Every unit of relative time is possessed of a certain magnitude, breadth as well as length, coincidence square to continuity, reciprocal relation perpendicular to duration. The spatial system is sensibly ordered along this digressive extension, as when in this single moment of insignificant duration I am conscious of the relative shapes and positions of objects on my table or look up to gaze out the window and note the trees, the houses, far off hills. Indeed, every order of reciprocals: quantity, quality, correspondences, predicates whether universal or particular, all the categories of ideation, every symbolic system, is by nature coexistential, possessed of an order of being, which is to say temporality, having little or nothing to do with duration. The seeming timelessness of all such relations, *sub specie aeternitatis*, does not mark them, however, as superior to time as classic metaphysic presumes, but points up rather the limited field of their reference.

Thus relative time swallows space at one gulp and with

room in its maw to accommodate an infinity of other correspondences as well. Of course, its abstract formal structure should be much like that of hypothetical space-time; while no more than two dimensions may be credited to relative time its collateral extension comprehends the three spatial coordinates, and more. Causality fits snugly into this relative scheme of time, an orderly sequence of reciprocal events, cause determining effect. Everything that enters into your or my experience may be accounted for, and all mutually interdependent, beautifully reciprocal.

But wait—did I say all? No, not quite everything is accountable under relative time since there still remains chance and free will. No chance for chance and none for free will in such a perfectly oiled reciprocating determinism as that of relative time. And if not free will, then not action either; whereas our investigations must remain fruitless unless and until we come upon action. Relative time has afforded us an image of reality rich in detail, more abundantly satisfying than that so meagerly presented to us by objective time, but yet it still falls short. It affirms a second principle besides duration, that of relation, as necessary to any reconstruction of time: it proposes that time has a structure. But it remains unable to complete this structure quite. Time is both duration and relation, and obviously something more besides. And this something must be the very element we seek, that element which shall identify action. And so we shall have to take up our search once more. For our purpose we needs must discover a category of time more pertinent than either duration or relation.

### *The Categories*

Before we attempt this search it will be well to recognize that man may not journey to discover, he cannot explore



in any direction, without a terra firma beneath his feet. Solid ground for a takeoff remains a prior condition to every inquiry into fact or fancy. How should we be able to think and reason, derive fresh concepts, were it not that already we possess earlier, broader, perhaps simpler working concepts as bases from which our every expedition may start? How even should we exercise perception without first owning some intuition of the self to distinguish at least between self and not-self? Upon this as foundation objective distinctions may very well be erected in time. And so we discover. Sight is scarcely a possession of the newborn babe; it waits to be developed.

A sense of self, of identity, is one of three fundamental categories to which even the most primitive of living creatures give evidence by their behaviors of possessing already in some degree. Some sort of sense of relation, together with an incipient sense of rhythm, complete a trio of basic categories. How life came into possession of these radical concepts likely we shall never know; sufficient that the tiniest, simplest single-celled animalcules that we are able to observe manifest a reasonable command upon all three. Even bacterial life, inchoate as we conceive this to be, yet shows itself master of its own vagaries of relation and of rhythm, self-hood alone seems wanting. We have every occasion to identify life with mind, to catalog life by the order of its mind, inasmuch as we see mind and life evolve together as one. Its abstract universal concepts or categories, milestones of the mind, are at once the achievements and starting points for further achievement of life and mind. . . . Let this then be our point of departure too.

Entering upon our investigations, we note already among several orders of single-celled creatures some grasp upon such concepts as those of similarity, difference, form, together with an ever firmer grasp upon the bedrock categories of

identity, relation, rhythm. What shall we say of a creature able to demonstrate locomotion directed with some sureness upon its objective, but that it has learned somehow to intuit both place and motion? Not necessarily that it has firmly mastered these abstract universal concepts, but at least it is in process of doing so. Life learns by generalizing from the particular, and finally in action universalizing the general: it is through endlessly repeated, hazardous experience—living—that life and mind evolves.

Having acquired some sense of the abstract universal concept, mind employs it by translating it back again into the general to formulate a new general approach to experience in the light of the dawning category, perhaps tentatively to initiate a fresh technique, a quite new faculty; subsequently it applies this general approach to the particular. This last would belong to recognition. Mind recognizes, explains to itself every fresh event in life, but strictly in terms of its own conceptualized prior experiences. Again it reacts to such limited recognition, its reaction informing consequent action. Wheels turning backward while others turn forward, to drive the whole works forward. We find regression recurrent, digression likewise recurrent, subprocesses within the slower long-term, major process of evolution.

Starting from its three simple root categories of identity, relation, rhythm, active life in time produced a considerable equipment of great universal categories. Man falls heir to all this wealth of instruments. Possibly a number of good sound working concepts have been lost on the way up, occasion for their useful employment lapsing somewhere along the particular line of evolution followed by homo sapiens. Indeed, it ought to be clear that many orders of sea life, insects, migratory birds, have developed faculties utterly unlike any that we possess, each such faculty the generalized manner of application to experience of one or more lost universal con-

cepts. But in the treasure house of our heritage remain, to list a few, besides the similarity, difference, form, place and motion, already noted: symmetry, sequence, plurality or recurrence, passivity, quality, kind, degree—and doubtless a score or more of others before ever we arrive at the consciousness level achieved by man. What first rendered man man to distinguish him forever from his brute forebears, was the dawn of a concept of purpose. No other creature of earth had yet attained to this.

This is not to deny to many of the superior orders of animal life a certain devotion to this or that end, an end of which they must have some idea, however vague. But no creature until man is reached gives evidence by its behavior of possessing the concept of purpose universalized to apply categorically throughout its range of activities. In bird and beast and social insect life remains as yet unconscious of purpose. But that purpose did become conscious with man must be inferred. Conquest of fire was never a random, aimless achievement, and assuredly not instinctive. Communicated expression through symbols, the conscious employment of tools, these point unmistakably to intention, and to considered action on intention, and to some reasoned grasp of the nature of intention.

Purpose is a time category. It presumes a future moment when intention shall be realized. Primitive man with a primitive sense of purpose possessed, no doubt, but a primitive sense of futurity. Present, past and future were likely commingled in his thought, confused; so we find it in the thinking of our contemporary primitives. But whatever *eoanthropus*' idea of futurity, we do know that he early set himself the task of controlling it. He conceived of magic, an as yet undifferentiated mixture of knowledge, intention and practice, of logic, ethic and esthetic, to give him power upon the future.

Originally this magic could only have been the special

property of the elders, the more experienced and cunning; later it would naturally devolve into the hands of the quicker witted, more strongly willed of whatever age to hold for life. But how shall one be sure that the powers of the shaman cease upon his death? And he who controlled the future, has he not provided for his own continuing future so that some essence of him still lives on? Or possibly his powers are freed now, no longer under control, to work mischief on clan or community. Then the purpose, the vital spirit of the dead man, needs be strengthened, and propitiated at the same time, to direct these forces beneficently. As man's concept of purpose developed over the eons his idea of the future should have developed with it and such beings as he believed to possess power upon this future gained in dignity. Their blessings upon the future were courted, their cursings feared and fled from. They came in time to be conceived of as divine priest-kings, deathless, or relatively so at least, or else as perennially reborn. Yet still man's idea remained to bend his gods holding his future in their grasp to his own will, whether through bribery, supplication, cajolery, or perhaps most often, through constraint and immolation of the person of the very god incarnate as part of a magical rite. The spirit of man is arrogant, imperious, and does not stick at sacrificing its heroes and its gods.

Magic, art, religion, all developed, directly or indirectly, out of man's concept of purpose. His social institutions expressed it. Industry, commerce, the domestication of animals, agriculture, arose successively out of his will to control his future. Slowly through the ages he won and made his own further and now distinctly human categorical concepts, such as instrumentality, action and passion, a future, value, pattern and design, number, reciprocity, condition, modality, negation, substance, property, space, duration, unity, contradiction, necessity or law, causality. This last named proba-



bly nowhere longer ago than eight to ten thousand years, very little before the beginnings of recorded history. Certainly our earliest written records betray scant idea as yet of causal connection, of scientific thought, but a still undisturbed faith in magic.

### *Causality*

Causality as originally conceived, as popularly held to this day, is a time concept. It assumes that whatever is is the effect of prior cause and completely determined by the content and potency of its cause. But the cause too must have had its cause, and this in turn; so that, since tracing back a regressive series to infinity is a desolate undertaking and vain, it was early considered incumbent to postulate a sometime first cause, supernatural and supertemporal, out of whose agency time and nature had emerged. Under such assumption, it need hardly be pointed out, nature and time become each an extended series of reciprocals, relative, phenomenal, not real. A corollary to causality is that, unless for the possible reintervention of this first cause or else some other supernatural agency, the course of time can only run downhill from its initial, critical moment, the one true moment of action, every subsequent moment tracing downward from it in an almost endless series of reactions. This hypothesis later yielded the so-called law of entropy which presumes a sometime end to time and the world in passivity. But we are digressing.

Causality was man's first clear recognition of the sequences of time as orderly: cause first, later effect. It organized the relation between these two events symbolically and so permitted it to be effectively organized in practice. There can be no question but that causality has served as a potent instrument in man's thinking and in his doing. A

worldwide revolution followed on its spread, not merely in man's mode of thought but in his every institution. More and more men turned attention to husbandry, to actively cause things to grow, replacing the desultory labors of the women of the tribe whose office had been the gathering of berries, roots and herbs. Agriculture came to be conceived rationally so that in time a sound technic developed. Peoples settled on the land, there to multiply and evolve complex communities along of an ever narrowing specialization of labors. Religions underwent radical changes. Mother gods were first conceived as genetrix, only to yield their primacy in time to father gods as the causal significance of the male procreative function became better grasped. Divinity gained in dignity, in authority, as cause of man and the universe. The bull, the ram, the goat came to worship, symbols of the generative powers in life. More cosmopolitan sun cults sprang up to dispute with such early intrenched phallic nature cults, with local cults of the corn god, divine son and lover of the eternally virgin earth goddess. Man's dominating idea remained still to command his future, futurity so mysterious, fickle, informed in fancy equally with menace and allure; but now less and less to command it directly through wayward, magical dictation, more and more by means of a systematic if still magical ritual to aid and so insure the orderly processes of nature, return of the sun, of seasonal rains, recurrence of spring vegetation, a continual rebirth of life. Myths to rationalize such rituals, archetypal creation myths, arose and spread and got embellished. Patriarchy became the rule in family and hence social organization. A solar calendar suggested itself to replace, or in some instances compromise with the moon calendar that the now ancient concept of duration first had prompted man to consider. Wealth grew. The arts flourished. Science was born.

Causality fails to peer into the future as does purpose, rather does it offer a rationalized reconstruction of past time. A cause is not a cause until its effect appears; till then it is at best a potential cause; with effect present, cause is definitely of the past. Causality organizes the interval between present and past, and no more. Its instrumentality is regressive and not progressive. While it argues with fair precision from effect back to cause, it can only point to past experience to shed light darkly on the consequences of present action. In other words, it possesses little of predictive validity. And hence to this day it has not been able entirely to supplant magic. For man does not live by bread alone, and while causality employed as an instrument served to fill his belly, it failed to feed his soul. He must ever demand some satisfying assurance of a future. Whereas purpose endows man with choice and free will to build his own best future, causality imposes a rigid determinism that would pen him in forever on his ancient dungheap. There is utter conflict in the implications of these two great universal concepts and conflict between the camps of their subscribers. The philistines of the world give allegiance to reason and causality; the puritans devote themselves to faith in purpose.

Historically, however, this conflict did not appear at once. Man is so constituted mentally as to be able to entertain a dozen or so mutually exclusive ideas before breakfast, and nowise affect his appetite. It is only as ideas inform institutions and these find themselves at war, that we begin to sense an antinomy. And even then we close our eyes and try to reconcile our irreconcilable concepts, the institutions to which they have given rise. We endeavor to effect a compromise, and we call this reasonableness, and we pride ourselves on our ready reasonableness. By nature men are arrant appeasers.

## *Wealth and Poverty*

The dichotomy between purpose and causality began to make itself felt from about the time of first social-economic-political organization of great city states. This would be the time too of a progressive changeover from matrilineal to patrilineal social organization. Proven now was agriculture as a rewarding way of life, so that causality which had informed the idea behind it was by way of making itself the dominant category of advancing thought. The most far-reaching of world revolutions was on, and man's every institution had to come under a fresh appraisal. Significant to us in our day was the then revised understanding of wealth.

From his earliest beginnings primitive man had recognized a special virtue in the weapons and tools he employed as instruments of his purpose. It is not necessary to assume that conscious purpose came before the first use of weapons and tools; rather is it presumable that effective use of chance sticks and stones occasioned, after the event, those primary rationalizings that brought instrumentality and purpose alike into the open to render them recognizable. But not till man was conscious of intention was he secure in the use of tools. Certainly before he chipped his first flint by intention he must have recognized his intention. And so the instruments which he fashioned with his hands, if not the chance weapons which he found ready to hand, became invested with his subjective purpose. However, any reasoned idea of the subjective is well beyond the powers of a primitive mind to deal with; it is difficult enough for us, goodness knows. Recognizing that his instruments were invested with some special virtue, that virtue which we in our day describe as function but which early man rationalized under the pre-adamite category of property, he attributed such property to an individual active spirit immanent within each instrument. Aladdin's lamp illustrates for us the primitive notion of instrument and its inherent



property, if in the lamp's case that most remarkable property of universal wish fulfillment. While the property belonged to the instrument, yet since at the command of him who employed the instrument, it peculiarly belonged to him as well. It contributed to his good—it was his good, his wealth. The primitive association of wealth with property was so intimate that the two terms remain with us as synonyms to this day. His club, spear, stone ax, pottery bowls and jars, fish hooks or cunningly woven net, were early man's properties and his wealth. Likewise his dog or cheetah that served him in the chase. The original and basic idea of wealth was of instrument, a means to an end, servant of purpose—what we today might refer to as capital goods.

Wealth was identified by man from the beginning with private property, the claims of Marxists to the contrary notwithstanding. Indeed, so very private and personal did early man esteem his properties that they were held inalienable, to be destroyed upon his death, broken, burnt or buried with him to serve him in the spirit world, not serve any other man in this. Only an enemy dared appropriate them to himself, and then at peril from the spirits immanent therein. Thus wealth, generally destroyed with the generation that had produced it, was little to be accumulated.

When man turned to husbandry however, tilling the soil, pasturing flocks and herds, it must have struck him that surplus produce stored against a future was also to be accounted wealth. Indeed a superior order of wealth. For it represented provision for his good future already in being without further labor, not just a reinforcement of his labors towards producing such provision. It was a credit on which he might draw at will. While he had not himself created he had effectively produced it; the spirit animate in it, if hardly offspring of his own, yet belonged to the widely diffused collective spirit of the corn, or of the cattle, or the sheep or

goats, to one or another of which he and his clan had long been totemically akin. And these great pervasive spirits surely were superior gods, the corn, the bull, the ram and faun, seminal causes to hold his future in their keeping. Generally well disposed to him their kinsman, he ought to be able to command the continued good will of these mighty divinities through sacrifice and supplication, worship. Thus, he reasoned cannily, he should possess the increase of his flocks and fields, the wealth this represented his, his private property if not quite so personal to him as were the instruments he fashioned with his own hands. And obviously this new wealth was alienable. To man at this period in history, budding patriarch, keenly desirous for his stock to prosper and so exalt his name, the notion appealed to leave his wealth behind him when he died, although strictly in accordance with his will. He first enjoined on his prospective heirs to honor his spirit in its passing with sacrifice, honor the great gods through whose favor his wealth had been produced; whereupon they might enjoy it and its further increase in peace and safety. And after it was seen that one form of wealth was indeed safely alienable, ventures were made in alienating every form. Men were enabled to embark on trade. This man gained a particular skill in one direction, that man in another; everyone wanted their wares. They found trade highly profitable. And wealth no longer seen as strictly instrumental, a means to an end, but now as in itself that end, began to multiply swiftly. Poverty and slavery came into being at about the same time to darken the otherwise bright page in history.

Primitive man had known no such thing as poverty. Want, yes; the near constant condition of primitive life was want. But all members of a clan or tribe banded together for the hunt or the battle, and all shared alike in the triumph and the feast which followed, or the defeat with its consequent

despair. A hero was he who so withstood privations as to wield his club or spear or ax to most significant effect. He might claim special honors, prestige, leadership, whereas leadership imposed mostly obligations. His lightning swift weapon, his particular property, got extolled in song and story along with him. Early in the Old Testament is noticed a tradition of "mighty men which were of old, men of renown."

The rise of wealth nowise ended want; rather did plenty induce a contrast serving to make want taste more bitter—poverty. And wealth concentrated in the cities offered a constant temptation to peoples in want to raid and despoil. Truly backward tribes had little chance; they had been pushed far back from good hunting grounds, fertile spots where the more advanced settled to farm, found cities. But pastoral nomads, warrior tribes, never ceased to harry the cities offering rich booty. Primitive peoples had never practised taking captives in battle; they regularly slew every enemy they laid hands on; and pastoral peoples, by no means primitive, still continued the tradition of enemy extermination—unless for the well-favored maidens of a kindred tribe to add to their stock of wives. But the idea seems to have dawned on the civilized—which is to say, the city dwellers—that an enemy captured alive might be turned, and with profit, into a beast of burden. Yoked with the ox he should be driven to produce as much in the way of foodstuffs or fibers as the free man, yet need not be accorded near as much for his subsistence. Or he could be put to work under the whiplash building high and higher the city's walls against the next enemy raid upon it. Or to man the oars of a warship or trading galley.

With the institution of slavery wealth expanded at a tremendous rate. A few good years, served by his ox and a sturdy young slave, could make the farmer rich. And the

citizen warrior hero might demand for himself a superior share of any war booty; in particular, whatever captives he personally made to keep or sell as slaves. Social cleavages began to form. At the very bottom of the social scale, of course, would be the erstwhile enemy made slave. But even here strata were bound to develop in time. The second or third generation slave, reared in association with children of the rich and privileged, inured to the same traditions, often bound to the family and they to him by sentimental ties, might be expected to hold himself far above newly captured slaves, barbarians. Nor were the children of the free uniformly rich and privileged; with time many fell into misfortune. And so, what with poverty and slavery together, it was not long before a city community became stratified into classes.

Here was a phenomenon repeated with scarce the slightest variation as community after community developed culturally past a certain point. The superior classes, superior economically, culturally, politically, justified their preferment by arguing fancied causal differences such as birth. In vain the dispossessed could protest that under the ancient dispensation, that of purpose, there had been no distinction as between man and man unless after a personal demonstration of courage, devotion to purpose; certainly not preferment by reason of inherited wealth tracing back to a past not one's own. Insurrections became frequent; appeasements were practised. Multiplied were the social-religious reformations attempted, from Hammurabi of Babylon on through Josiah of Judah and Solon of Greece, expedient compromises in effect. But these little ameliorated the lot of the oppressed, or not for long, and they turned for escape to dreams of a Messiah to come who should redeem them out of bondage. And somehow in time this dream of a Redeemer received the



further embellishment of a foretelling of his virgin birth, an effect utterly flouting cause.

Under our recent and continuing so-called Industrial Revolution, culminating period in the action on men's minds of the category of causality, slavery has been more or less done away with. Because at no time over the millennia has the slave proved other than a malingerer in industry, never the economic asset he is found to be in agriculture. Yet poverty continues to deepen and spread alongside fast flourishing wealth, to manifest itself more sharply these days perhaps than at any previous time in history. At the same time the masses of men seem to be forsaking religion with its promise of a good future following on high purpose, for politics and dreams of a welfare state.

### *Metaphysic*

Among the new classes of men that in those earlier days arose was one highly peculiar, professionalized thinkers, teachers not doers. Thus its members maintained little commerce with purpose, much with causality. They called themselves lovers of wisdom, philosophers. Professedly dealing in ideas, specialists in antinomies, to them was delegated the task of healing the sick world by forcing some sort, any sort, of reconciliation between the root ideas of causality and purpose. Blithely they set to work.

Causal thinking long ere this had evolved the notion of a sometime first cause behind the beginning of time to push it determinedly onward; on the other hand, purpose would envision time's progression as due to tension upon a yet undetermined future. Our philosophers considered it expedient to nod to both views; whereupon if purpose would only continue to pull while causality pushed, time ought to get by

doubly sure and twice as fast—so fast indeed as to render it hardly noticeable as a problem. Wishfully thinking along such lines it was not long before they yoked causality and purpose together peaceably—in the philosophic mind, at least. And conceiving the two utter irreconcilables as twin draft animals, what more natural than for our sages to classify them together, purpose as just another sort of cause. And to distinguish from their first cause pushing from behind—they capitalized it thus: First Cause—they proceeded to rename purpose Final Cause, also capitalized, to run before. And to commemorate their victory, for so our philosophers deemed their mediation, they sculptured out of enduring stone an image which they named Metaphysic, capitalizing this no less. Metaphysic under their hands took shape as a monster, a vast and fearful Siamese twin, Final Cause before and First Cause coming after, time the vinculum between. As further symbol the wise men constructed a mechanical toy, a sort of airplane with propellers to function both front and rear, and this they dubbed Reality, capitalized the same. But their Reality never succeeded to lift itself off the ground. Whereupon the philosophers argued noisily that Reality really should be flightless. However, argument which begins in completest accord has a way of ending up in disagreement, and depending upon the shade of opinion expressed as to which, rear propeller or fore, tractor or pusher design, causality or purpose, faith or works, contributed more effectively to the flight of their ever flightless Reality, various schools of philosophy developed. The left wing radicals espoused the cause of causality, the right wing conservatives remained a bit partial to purpose. Religion and the arts arrayed themselves generally on the side of the conservative idealists, science on the side of the radical empiricists. The battle continues to this day, although science seems now in possession of the better part of the field, particularly so in

Germany and Russia, with religion in retreat, unless possibly in Tennessee and Arkansas, and elsewhere on Sundays.

### *A Better Time*

Nevertheless it must not be supposed that the efforts of the philosophers have proved entirely in vain. Impossible monstrosity though they wrought, it yet emended and enriched our mental image of time: it gave us a better time. To the two moments first organized by causality, reciprocal moments, it joined a third moment of purpose, of fulfillment. It was a fatal weakness, certainly, that this climactic moment was removed far off, placed at the utter end of time—time thereby defined and shortened with the world's doom to be expected momentarily; the great gods whom men for long had looked to as champions of their future, likewise removed far off, so that directly new and more immanent supplemental gods had to be invented to serve men's psychic need—yet still time was thereby endowed with a nobler rhythm than ever it had known before. A warmly satisfying rhythm which for such as were blest to be able to capture its fulness, cast out all sense of fear.

But the mediated concept presumes a date for fulfillment, an end to time, as well as a beginning, and in any analysis neither of these ideas is thinkable. By a supreme effort of faith alone is one able to give them credence. It is true that orthodox religionists beg the question of time's ending by promising an eternity after time. Nevertheless this eternity should still be time, a time without end only in so far as it persists beyond and free from further purpose. No self-respecting human can have traffic with any such purposeless, meaningless eternity. Purposive time is man's ancient inalienable birthright and I, for one, quite refuse to consider time divorced of purpose. And this disposes

definitely of causality too, so far as I am concerned. It was a useful instrument in its day and fitted perfectly into the scheme of relative time; indeed, causality is clearly the condition of that rational reconstruction of time which is relative time, and which I have rejected for myself and for you. Instead, I propose to discover a better time, and I believe we have the clue to it now. To the objective principle of duration, and the principle of reciprocal relation, I intend to join the subjective principle of purpose. Let us stand back to see what this construction offers. But first to prepare the stage.

### *Subjectivity*

We need to define in advance what we mean by subjectivity, and this presents no easy problem. It is like trying to look into one's own eyes or directly inspect the back of his own head. Our senses which give us cognizance of things act only upon things, which is to say, on objectivity, and subjectivity is not that, certainly. Our rational processes are digressive to act upon the representations of things, their symbolic images, and on the relations of such representations, and even on the relations of these relations of representations; thus they do have commerce with a certain order of relations which we term subject-object relations, but yet they do not regard the subject itself out of relation, nor has mind any power to do so. Other than reason and sensibility we possess no faculty which we may in any way enlist in our undertaking, unless that most active mode of sensibility, intuition; but while intuition is a valuable aide to reason, and we shall likely be calling on it often as such, it is scarcely to be trusted in command, being altogether too bold and indiscriminate. We shall have to depend on reason after all, and through study of the relations of the subject



gain the best idea we may of subjectivity itself. It will be much like venturing to lift ourselves by tugging at our bootstraps, but nothing else is left us.

At once, however, one pertinent circumstance presents itself to dimly light our enterprise. It is that no subject-object relation that we know of is ever entirely one-sided; the subject acts upon the object, but the object in turn reacts on the subject. It is this reaction of the object on the subject that our senses register in perception. So that while we may never come upon the subject as direct object to remain passive till we can define it, we shall often come upon it as reciprocal, no longer purest subject; even so, we should be able to distil its essence mentally. Obviously there are no absolutes in this world, certainly no changeless subject that we are anywise able to discover, but instead all is relative, and even subjectivity should be determined by its relations.

Anyway, we are able to distinguish the subject from the object and also from the reciprocal. We say that the subject acts upon the object; the object has no power to act but only to react to and on the subject; in this latter relation both object and subject are commuted into reciprocals. We identify the subject as that which peculiarly has power to act. If we could only define action now, by this should we be able to define subjectivity.

### *Action*

So we are right back where we started from, confronted by our original problem, action. And yet we have not meandered aimlessly, I trust, but the manner of our return has been cyclical. At least, I feel that we have gleaned pertinent suggestions along the way. So that I do not now hesitate to assert that whatever else we may find to say about action, we must affirm it as a forward-reaching, purposive process,

not mere movement or motion, the transition of reciprocals, but a process by which an active agent changes something more or less in accordance with his own design or purpose, and is himself thereby also changed. The idea of change must certainly enter as a condition into any definition of action, and also the idea of purpose. And as corollaries of purpose, choice and free will, and chance supplemental to change.

### *Rhythm and Change*

By change we have reference only to change in relation. Whether the active agent effects a change in the constitution or structure of the object of his activity is not material, all that matters is that he has changed its relation to himself, his relation to it. Thus in sense perception we are active, yet in no material way do we affect a thing by looking at it, or by hearing, smelling, tasting, touching it; but our relation to that object and its to us gets changed through our activity. It stands now in a newer relation to us. And the change in the relation becomes the measure of the activity: if no change it well may be argued that perception has not functioned. Consciousness is a process of unceasing change in relation; the process of change gets interrupted only with loss of consciousness. The characteristic of all activity is change in relation, with high frequency, rapid change marking intense activity, the extent of change in the relations measuring the action. To the categories defining action it would be well to add one other: creativeness. Action engenders unique relations, progressively new unfoldments, affording spice to time.

We measure time too by its changes rather than by duration. Indeed, we have no check on duration but only on the changes in such relations as obtain between ourselves

and our environment. We see the sun first appear above the eastern horizon; perhaps we listen to the cock crow, twitter of birds, sense the dewy fragrance of dawn, tingle to the cool feel of it; shadows are vague and monstrous, the earth dun, the light's in the sky: a new day is born. Steadily the shadows shorten, become more dense, light leaves the sky to play upon the ground; the sun mounts the heavens soon to shine down hotly from overhead: it is noon. But noon is simply the climactic moment of the day and quickly past; the sun distances meridian continuing his westerly course; shadows lengthen; infinite are the changes that mark declining day: soon it is evening, the earth drab once more, shadows monstrous, with the light in the western sky and the glory of sunset upon us. And so night and its rest; and presently the recurrence of another new day. We measure the day by its changes, that is, by our successive actions upon and reactions to environment; and we measure the seasons by their changes; and the plurality of days and months and years by the cyclical recurrence of change.

Now, recurrent change signifies rhythm. Action and time and consciousness, and indeed every relation into which the subject may enter, is each attended with rhythm. The days and the moons and seasons and years, and generations and eras, geological epochs no less, possess each its unmistakable rhythm pattern. Perception has its rhythm, and intellection also, and action as well, and a little later we are like to see that the patterns of these three are distinct and different from each other, while yet each order enters into the other two, growing, evolving, generating fresh processes, more comprehensive action categories, emerging in each case as a unit. Change has this peculiar function, and the same is evidenced to our senses in the rhythms of sight and sound, of organizing discrete, even discordant elements, together into new and essential wholes.

But yet rhythm and change are scarcely convertible terms. Rhythm signifies a patterned series of changes in relation established through pastness, of measured and to such extent, assured recurrence. Whereas change in relation itself is an affair of the present, and of the present only; no change can take place in past events but merely that pale reflection of change which comes to us as a rhythm. Perhaps this is why, although we unfailingly identify consciousness with change, we commonly neglect to associate its series with rhythm, as we needs must do before we may determine its pattern. Change is the condition of rhythm, prior to it, establishing the now as prior to the past, a necessary condition of the past.

But here we are met with a complication, our judgment at once supported and opposed. Reason supports us arguing that the now is a necessary reference point for any relation of pastness, hence it obviously conditions each event in regard to its pastness. And from the ethical standpoint: any event of the past must once have been present action, and necessarily such before it went past. But common sense is shocked at what it can only regard as an inversion. To it the past is that which has been undergone, and certainly prior to what is even yet not completely within experience. So here we have three positions, all seemingly tenable, but two of which are seen to exclude the third. How shall we reconcile them? Reason characteristically rushes in to mediate. Priding itself on its impartiality, and having already supported the ethical position, it turns face about to back up common sense. Reason argues: considering the past as cause of the present, which it certainly is, it clearly is prior to this present. And so, again characteristically, reason impales itself upon the horns of a dilemma.

The difficulty arises out of a mistaken notion as to just



what the now is. Common sense interprets it one way, ethic has a different understanding; reason possesses no understanding at all but will argue contentedly for a proper relation between terms, however ethic and common sense may agree to define those terms. To common sense, and to reason no less, change is the eternal mystery. Only, it is not time. Hence the now, the time of change, is reckoned not as time at all but, by common sense, as a constant and continuing vantage point, like the rear observation platform of a swift moving train, from which events flow backward in an endless regress. Reason leans to some such view likewise, inasmuch as its pet concept causality pictures reality as just such a regressive series. Of course reason refuses to admit that causality belongs to regressive order since it owns to a compelling intuition that reality is somehow a progression. Wherefore it seeks to establish a first moment of time as constant from which all events may flow in a thus artificially arranged progressively causal series. But it can not escape its dilemma, for now the now must constantly recede from this constant in still a regressive series.

As between reason and common sense common sense has the better sense. If reality were merely the scenery observed from the moving train, time the order of its appearance, if indeed objectivity were all, then the sense of common sense should be unassailable. But time is even more the observation platform, and the very train with driving engine ahead tearing along the rails actively to change relations between the observer and the sights observed. Common sense is secure in its perceptive judgments upon objectivity: objectivity is infinitely regressive; but it can not fathom the subjective, progressive, active function of the now. Which suggests that common sense, and sense in general, is a regressive process. Reason on the other hand, is neither regres-

sive nor progressive, as it fondly fancies itself to be, but characteristically digressive. Like a good wife and mother trying to compose differences between father and children, truly the most reasonable creature in the world, it argues endlessly and convinces itself of its own sovereign wisdom, yet of itself gets nowhere in particular.

### *Action Analyzed*

But to analyze a definite action. I intend a doing: let us say that I have long entertained certain ideas regarding the nature of time which I believe should hold value to the world, and now my purpose is to translate these ideas to paper and try to get them published. So I prepare myself with the necessary materials and set to work. Here is activity in process. The project is undertaken upon choice, and of my own free will, with a definite purpose in view. I must enforce certain changes in my thought, organize and order it for communication; change the fresh, clean surfaces of the sheets of paper before me by marking symbolic disfigurements upon them; enforce changes in the accustomed routine of my labors for an uncertain period of time; indirectly develop toward a changing of your attitude. Almost an infinity of changes projected, with chance waiting wolflike on each change; so that if my labors are to prove fruitful, as I hope and trust, it will only be because I shall have created assuredly something new—new in any event, if only a new abortion. And everything which I do or may at all do is on the now; I wrestle now with this problem, now with that, to clear it to your satisfaction and my own. So my intention changes constantly, concerned narrowly with the development of each successive step; the project is manifold while yet consistently one. One is the action from first to

last, and the time which measures and is measured by the action is just as definitely one and now.

But yet while one, the action and the time may each be seen to involve a series of three periods. Aristotle remarked, apropos of tragedy, that action has its beginning, its middle, and its end; and although we might wish to improve upon his terms choosing others less vague and more definitive, and we shall be attempting this, it would be difficult to better his observation. The beginning of the action is to be found in the serious thought which I long gave to the problem of time. This was preparation, and we might well rename Aristotle's category of the beginning, the preparation of the action; but only that preparation as a term connotes in some degree a conscious approach, intention upon a preconceived culmination, and this hardly accords with the facts in the case; rather are the beginnings of action apt to be inchoate, their organization developing later along with slowly evolving intention; so that as a term more precise than preparation let me offer instead: the conditions precedent. Here then is the beginning of action, the heterogeneous soil out of which it shall presently grow, passive past conditions. The middle of the aforesaid action stands revealed as the period from the initial moment of conception that my ideas may hold genuine value for the world up to the moment when I first put forth conscious intention to realize those values. This latter moment of first intention initiates the end of the action, its most active, climactic period; which final period we shall certainly call: the culmination of the action, a term precisely definitive. But for the middle, a reciprocal period between passive conditions precedent and active culmination, I can imagine no term so pat as the time-honored one for an event reciprocal to others, and accordingly we shall name this middle period: the cause of the action.

## *Time's Dimensions*

So much for the primary structure of action, but it will repay us to consider similarly the corresponding series of time. In making reference to the period of the action as one, an action not yet terminated, I naturally employ the term, now. I say, "Now since I have begun to think seriously about time," and so I distinguish this continuing and uncompleted period from any other. Or I may say, "Now that I am transcribing my thoughts," and here the now refers to a narrower period of time, describing an event still incomplete but to which the period of early reflection bears the relation of pastness. And so with any interval of time, no matter what its quantity, the now has reference to its continuing, which is to say its progressively changing subjective character. In this way I may speak of the present week, or present month or year, or even the present era. But so soon as a period is closed, no more to be changed, it takes on objectivity with pastness, no longer now and here and identified with an active I, but then and there and defined in itself in objective relation to me. Thus the time of our entire action, or any action, broadly now, reveals itself as a structure of three periods: a narrower now that refers to the present period of culmination; an initial period complete and past that belongs to the conditions of the action; and a causal middle period, neither complete nor yet incomplete. And of these three periods the earliest is relatively objective and passive; the middle period is altogether relative, reciprocal; while the culminating period is subjective and active.

Past time is dead and only the present exists, is real. But this present, the now, is not definite in duration. We have the ability to stretch it in memory, or in a study of history, or in archaeological or even geological research. Yet the farther the now is pushed back, the more relatively



objective its character becomes. Conversely, the more pronounced its subjective character the more sharply do we find it directed forward, in hope, in faith, in fear, in intention on some future, its durational extension dwindling to a short and shorter span. And yet in no event is either the backward or the forward extension lost entirely, nor ever the collateral or relative extension; every least unit of time is possessed of magnitude; so that we may without hesitation affirm that time, the now, owns three dimensions: action, the subjective, a forward extension, progressive; duration, passive and objective, regressive extension; and digressive extension, relative reciprocal coexistence. And so we identify the essentially solid structure of time.

### *Time, Action and Reality*

All this would seem to involve us in a recognition of time, of reality too, as a function of action. Certainly not a function of mind, the classic metaphysical assumption under which the real identifies itself with the ideal. This last envisions reality as changeless, time as eternal, so that to account for the obviously ephemeral character of mundane affairs it was found necessary to invent a special category to accommodate them, that of appearance. Under this assumption the substance of mortal life gets reduced to a mirage, every aspect of life becomes a bad dream. Death putting an end to this dream of life is rendered the gateway to a changeless and eternal real life, and herein lies the proffered promise of salvation. But yet death admittedly remains the condition for such salvation, while a life changeless throughout eternity, purposeless, still looks essentially like death to me; so that to my mind, and likely to a host of others, what this doctrine finally sums up to is that there is nothing

real but death. Ethically any such way of thinking is abomination. Almost any other conception that might prove supportable should be all to the good.

But is it quite sound to regard action as prior, time and reality developments out of it? Was Faust right when he considered to emend John to read: "First was the Deed?" Certainly reality can nowise be held to develop out of action for then it should be reality no longer but instead, action the fundamental reality. Nor is it reasonable to maintain that time, if by time we mean the now, develops out of action when so obviously the two concur. Rather are we constrained to look upon action and time and reality as all one and the same, each but a different aspect of the other. Reality presents the objective and particular face, time the relative and general, action the subjective, universal. And that this is not merely a reasonable assumption but the innate conviction of flesh, our senses organized upon its truth, can be attested by any actor upon life's stage. He knows his agony for real. At the moment he perceives this reality as painful action; looking back later he is likely to give it the general name of life, of time. The distinctions between time and action and reality rest altogether in the point from which this life is viewed: the three are one.

At the same time phenomenal distinctions are bound to arise incidental to immediate perspective of viewpoint. Of action we are ever directly at the center so that it is little to be regarded objectively at all; we are left to intuit about it. And when we turn attention to time it is likely to be the durational extension that obtrudes, of reality its relative reciprocal or coincident extent. But let us remember that perspective foreshortens to pervert, when it does not altogether delete, the appearance of ever one structural dimension; which will explain why the one great central process, multi-dimensioned, should present such different features under

different approaches to it so that we little recognize it for one. It is the story of the three blind men and the elephant. Nevertheless we do recognize that duration belongs to reality and to action as well as to time, relation to action and to time along with reality—this last brought out only recently; it remains to note that a dynamic extension belongs likewise to all three, as we needs must do before we can arrive at any adequate idea of evolution.

### *Evolution*

The transcendental idealist may be inclined to accept our analysis of an action, if with reservations—he does not genuinely believe in action anyhow—but he will be horrified at our identification of time and action with reality. His idea of time is of an ethereal medium in which events take place, yet somehow independent of event. Of reality, as a timeless objectivity, the “thing-in-itself,” shorn of all relation, static. We, on the other hand, have been at pains to demonstrate that reality and time and action are all essentially one and the same process—process, please note, antithesis to a static condition. We hold that there can be no reality divorced from time or action; nowise a time independent of action and reality; nothing of action apart from reality and time. We assert that any reality remains dependent on a subject who shall relate it to himself, and so we refuse to countenance any such meaningless abstraction as “thing-in-itself.” In other words, we maintain that in this world nothing can remain static, whereas time and action and reality enter constantly into one another, phases abstracted from the one dynamic central process. This cosmic process, only within the past century or so brought to determined notice, goes by the name of evolution. In treating of time we are in effect treating of evolution. For time is

event, and whole dynamic series of events, nowise an abstract ethereal medium but a process very real.

### *Mergence and Emergence*

We have noted that action is subjective: it follows then that action, and so time, must be as manifold as the number of individual subjects in this world. And even more so, since each subject will experience, narrowly, many times. To say, "I had a good time," may be a valid statement of fact referring to a single action interval which I found pleasant if not necessarily profitable. Any unrelated unit of time is a time by itself. Related through serial activity to other units, or related coactively, time has the fluid property of merging with other times to integrate new time units of ever more extensive magnitude. It is the nature of time's serial organization which especially concerns us here, although its structural affinities, what well might be termed its valence, will be found much the same in any construction. We noted earlier the rhythmic character of time, the progressive recurrence of intervals in series, and these discrete series within more widesweeping series. We regarded briefly the serial development of phenomenal time, the day and the month and seasons and years, hence generations too, each interval a series of beginning, middle and end, merging with other similar intervals to emerge each time as a unique and identifiable new whole, an ampler time unit. Let us examine more minutely now the pattern of emergence of real time, the subjective now.

Its general structure has already engaged us, and its cardinal series, the rhythm of action; yet action is not the one and only dimension of time. Action is subjective, but time owns objectivity and relativity too as essential extensions. How then do these manifest themselves in the pattern,



and how fit into the whole scheme, the four-square structure of time? But it well may repay us to consider first a parallel structure, language structure, for hints.

### *Syntax*

Any good text book tells us that the function of language is communication with words its essential elements. Words are symbols with meanings in themselves, referring back to images in the mind, simple images of things or of events experienced; and by putting words together in meaningful arrangement it becomes possible to build larger and more complex meanings: phrases, clauses, propositions and sentences, which will mean not merely the sum of the meanings of the words that enter into them, but to which is added the function of the meaning of their arrangement. In language construction the truth gets made particularly clear that a whole is ever greater than the mere sum of its parts. And the right words put together in just the right way enables us to reflect and represent any object we can conceive, any thought we may at all think, any action we are able to imagine. Given command of just the right words and the very rightest order of their arrangement I should nowise despair of being able to represent adequately, and so communicate to you, the substance of that whole vast dynamic process we are here investigating, evolution, reality, time or action. What this manifestly means is that language grew up somehow to duplicate in its structure the structures of action, reality or time.

Our text book reminds us that words admit of being classified under three general categories. The first category comprises the substantives, words which refer back to simple images of things. Under the second category are to be listed the modifiers, reciprocals, words referring to coexisting

qualities, properties or relations of things. The third category includes all words denoting action. There is a possible fourth category of words, connectives, and even a fifth, interjections; but connectives more or less qualify our reference to things or to actions and admit of being classified satisfactorily under the second category; while it remains an open question whether interjections ought to be considered words at all, no definite meanings attaching to them but only such as derives from their context.

A mere multiplicity of words all from the same category, as for instance, "John, Joe, cow, horse, clock, doors, sea," no matter how extended, fails to constitute a meaningful unit. "Beautiful, black, sharp, strong, glistening," and so on endlessly, still remains without point. Likewise, "go, rush, is, suppose, keep, swim." Syntax refers to an arrangement of pertinent words out of all three categories together; whereupon the active word or words yield action, the substantives yield presentation, the qualifying words evaluation or judgment, the particular order of arrangement something more besides to the construction. A new whole thus emerges, a new unit of meaning more extended and complex, whose parts are pertinent presentation, pertinent judgment, pertinent action; the evolved new whole meaning all these elements together, and more.

As communication the newly evolved whole is ever a representation; but it may particularly represent an action, or it may represent a presentation, or serve to represent a more or less complete judgment.

Words remain our primary building-blocks, but the propositions and sentences into which we cast them proceed at once to take their place as the actual units we work with in constructing any extended communication. Words are called up out of our unconscious, although we may consciously reject one as inadequate now and then—in which

case we have to dip back into the well of our unconscious to find a better or else, maybe, consult a Thesaurus. Meaningful arrangement of words into propositions and into sentences most generally takes place in the subconscious. But the joining of propositions and sentences into a still more ample, orderly and so meaningful extended communication, demands conscious construction. Nevertheless much the same process gets repeated in joining sentences together as in joining words together; pertinent presentation, pertinent evaluation, pertinent action remain constant elements in all good composition. Good style demands a proper balancing of these elements along with never-ending variety.

So much for our text book on Syntax.

Presentation . . . judgment . . . action. The self-same emergent and emergent elements as we saw issue holistically into an action, into time. Because the character of conditions precedent, passive and objective, is definitely a presentation; that of the cause, relative reciprocal, just as clearly a representation or judgment; the final term, culmination or climax, refers specifically to action. *The evolved new whole is seen determined as to category by the final term of its integrating series.* Intuition whispers that presentation, which is also to say perception, and representative judgment, intellection or mind, are similar processes and similarly integrated, determined likewise by the final terms of their syntactical series. Let us see.

Action is the process through which purpose reduces itself to concrete form; thus an unmistakable function of action is to objectify the subjective—"by his works shall ye know him." Similarly a function of presentation would be to relate the objective; of judgment to subjectify the relative. These fundamental processes enter formatively into each other in life, in time, in the structure of all reality, much the same as in language structure. It remains to determine

the syntactical series of presentation and judgment as we have already done for action.

### *Perception or Presentation*

The presentation or perception process might just as well be termed the process of cognition, for such is its correlate function. But it may be found difficult to analyze cognition into its elements inasmuch as the moment of its structural series is so brief as to seem irreducible, the least conscious interval of time—its serial elements themselves belong to the subconscious. To investigate events of magnitude so minute we should need a highpowered magnifier.

But we do possess just such a magnifier in the drama. The theater offers not so much an imitation as an heroic reflection of life. It represents by means of presentation, thus stepping up the processes of reality. What is subjectively unconscious in life (and presumably so to the actors on the stage) becomes to an audience objectively subconscious and even relatively conscious. What is supposedly subconscious to the actors, intuited, an undefined awareness, translates itself to the plane of the fully conscious as it crosses the footlights. So that whatever be the sequence of events demanded to produce a satisfying presentation on the stage, that sequence will reflect the serial order of moments involved subconsciously in perception, cognition, presentation.

Perception is peculiar in that it has three modes. To begin with, there is intuition, actively emotional, the subject first aware of a new and possibly disturbing factor entering into its situation which it needs must somehow take into account. There follows examination of said factor as sensory object—we call this mode sense-perception. And finally, a



rational consideration of the percept gained, its validation or rejection according to the subject's conceptualized previous experience of similar objects.

### *Representation or Judgment*

The three modes of perception run concurrent with the three sequent intervals of representation, or call it judgment, intellection or mind. Fully conscious is this general judgment, hence is it easily analyzed into its elements by introspection. Its initial interval, actively emotional, intuitional, subjective, introducing a new factor disturbing to the subject: let us call this crisis. The second interval, that of objective examination of the situation, what so definitive a term for this as exposition? And the final term, of course, should be judgment, but only that we find three distinct planes of judgment: the common sense variety, particular, no more than a rational presentation; the representative or general judgment which the interval we are considering completes; and the critical judgment, more or less universal, arrived at through extended painful action. Most judgments, however, both the common-sense-particular and the representative-general judgment, will be found ultimately at fault, leading to infinite complications in life, so that for dramatic purposes the most definitive term for this final moment in the intellection or representation or judgment series has been found to be: the complication. So much for representation; we have established its series and their definitive terms as crisis, subjective and active; exposition, objective, passive and particular; and finally complication, relative, reactive and general. The order of this series quite bears out our intuition. And so to return again to perception, presentation.

## *Crisis*

A crisis merged of three presentation moments is, to introspection, an interval at once initiatory of something new, actively emotional, endowed with suspense. The character of certain crises will be found more especially initiatory, of others more actively tense and emotional, still others are most featured with suspense. But yet in no crisis is any of these elements lost entirely; they all belong to the structure of crisis as its elements. Their serial order becomes obvious; occasion, the initiating moment, cannot be conceived to follow but necessarily as leading into the tension and its suspension; it *occasions* tension and suspense. Nor can suspense be thought of as antecedent to but as necessarily following on the moment of mounting tension. It represents the synthesis of tension with the occasion, the swiftly developed moment of intuition, an immediate pre-conceptual awareness. Yet it must not be assumed that occasion lapses with the beginning or the rise of tension, nor tension with the setting in of suspense. Occasion remains constant throughout a crisis, indeed for the entire interval of judgment; tension and suspension constant too from first inception of each until dissipated later in the judgment.

## *Sense-Perception or Exposition*

It is the experimentally proven constancy of sensation in sense-perception which misleads the Gestalt school of psychologists into asserting that sensation is the whole of presentation, that a percept is one with the sensation, a single irreducible event. But the drama demonstrates the falsity of this position to certify rather the judgments of introspective psychologists generally. Any exposition on the stage of more than atomic magnitude unfolds as a series of three distinct

moments or scenes, the first of which is relative and general in bearing, expressing attitudes; the second, subjective and active, communicates the sensation; while the third is objective and particular, a presentation.

Attitude remains the inescapable starting point for sense-perception. The same stimulus to sensation will lead different subjects holding different attitudes to different percepts of the object presented; which will explain why all men do not admire and desire the same woman. The same subject will hold or adopt different attitudes on different occasions, so that the same object is never twice beheld in precisely the same way. Even before attitude, antecedent to the starting in of sense-perception, comes emotional awareness of the object, intuition, to enlist a special attitude toward the object to be perceived, an attitude appropriate to the occasion in relation to that subject. As a moment attitude is mediate between emotional awareness of the object and its subsequent definition through sensation. Sensation is the operation, as a moment a relatively active one, *through* which the object becomes defined; but the object only *arrives* at its definition in presentation, in a particularizing synthesis of the more or less constant sensation with the attitude.

### *Judgment*

The moment of rational presentation finally, the common-sense judgment, almost breaks the surface of consciousness, so that its integrating series is not too hard to come at by the introspective philosopher. Hegel defined its series as thesis, antithesis, synthesis. Which no one can argue with; but I prefer as more sharply definitive for dramatic purposes the terms: desire, obstacle, reconciliation or composition. In all three modes of perception, which merge into the three intervals of a general judgment, we find the initial

moment (occasion and attitude and thesis or desire) to be relative and general; the middle moment (tension, sensation and antithesis or obstacle) subjective and active; the final moment (suspension, presentation and synthesis or composition) objective and particular—the process of presentation is a particularizing process. And this bears out our intuition as to the integration of its series.

### *The Human Consciousness*

Again it wants to be pointed out that all three series of presentation belong to the subconscious, describe its range. Their function is progressively to relate the objective; the function of the more comprehensive conscious representation process in its turn, to subjectify the relative. In the interval of crisis the object is grasped at in its totality, intuited whole while yet undefined. As an undefined totality related somehow to the subject, but just how not clearly marked, the object first enters into consciousness. Or can this be called consciousness? Certainly it is not yet full consciousness; and yet the subject is consciously aware of something, what he cannot say, his consciousness of the object emerging as an intuition of the object, emotional and non-conceptual, pure awareness. Sensible exposition follows: analysis of the object into such of its elements as are already known through past experience, conceptualized elements, leaving perhaps a residue of elements resisting analysis, unrecognized since for the first time experienced, known. It is the emotional flavor of this unanalyzed residue which stamps the experience as unique, the object unique among all other objects in relation to the subject. The relating of the object to the subject gets completed in judgment, and at the same time, subjectification of this relation, the subject incorporating



into itself its own representation of the object. The analyzed elements are reassembled into a conceptual, formalized construct, the representation, together with the unanalyzed remainder; this last for the first time brought under a covering concept, whether adequately or not is not for the moment material. As representation the object now belongs to the subject, its relation to the subject subjectified.

How should it be that the subject incorporates its object into itself? A ray of light which the physicist declares to be a stream of pulsating corpuscles, does the subject take into itself and retain this very stream of swift corpuscles? But just what is the subject's object? The only possible answer is that its own active experience is its object. Its experience of the stream of corpuscles comes as light, and this experience is retained by the subject permanently as an image, or call it a concept of light. If matter were primitive as the materialist tacitly assumes, objectivity prior to action, there could be no explaining of action and life and cognition and consciousness and subjectivity; but with action coextensive with reality the real is readily definable in terms of the subjective, spiritual terms. The material is to be recognized then as a function of action, its passive phase, a provisional aspect in the endlessly unfolding process of evolution, of all reality. Whether the corpuscular stream that we refer to as light is in itself a manifestation of spiritual activity other than that of the experiencing subject, we can not say. It is entirely reasonable to assume that it is so. But it is not necessary to postulate any such thing; sufficient that the experiencing subject is active, and active upon its experiences; what it experiences is its own activity. The subject's activity seems directed toward progressively learning to know itself, that self a cosmos in itself. A pertinent question might be whether this cosmos is not somehow coextensive with all reality.

## *The Unconscious*

Below the level of the subconscious we have to infer still a further process whose function would be to objectify the primordially subjective, identify and distinguish the self from the not-self, integrate the myself. This process, an action process, should be wholly unconscious, inscrutable, so that we can have no certain means of verifying our speculations about it. Yet it is necessary to assume such a process, referring to it emotion, conation, habit and instinct, as well as the great number of unconscious vital subprocesses of the subject's physical being. Its period would constitute the least integral unit of time, the winking of an eye. Habit and instinct, emotion and conation, all are purposive although unconsciously so, active. The condition for these activities would logically be the nascent identity, a primitive subjectivity—with Freud let us call this the “id,” together with an elemental sense of otherness and of rhythm; their cause, a relating of these elements into some sort of generalized shadowy pre-concept of self-in-a-world, the ego; their culmination the instinctive, habitual or conative action of self upon environment, or else subjective release through emotion. The instinct, habit, emotion or conation so integrated, emerges as a subconscious moment in the more comprehensive presentation process, coloring the character of the subsequent presentation; just as the presentation, successively intuitional, sensory-objective, rational, enters on completion into the still more comprehensive representation process; and as the completed representation, by turns conditioning, causal, culminating, is involved in the conscious action process. Each more comprehensive rhythm and process develops as a function of its constituent rhythms.

It is significant that primitive unicelled creatures give evidence by their behaviors of just such a fundamental ac-

tion process as we have just now predicated, and no process of more elaborate function. Orders of life somewhat more complex testify to the beginning, later to the organization and subsequent development of a presentation process with its obvious function of sense perception. Only among the social insects, birds and mammals, is betrayed much more than the bare incipience of a representation process, and this nowhere fully exploited, not even by man. For it remains to be completed in the conscious action process to which man alone has achieved, and so far but haltingly. Clearer understanding of the nature of time, of action, evolution, ought to give man surer command upon action and representation alike.

### *The Critical Judgment*

We are able to trace still another process in time, first evidence of it already having caused many of us a bit of confusion, no doubt. We were forced to differentiate presentation into three successive modes, identifying the last of these as rational, a judgment. This notwithstanding that the specific judgment process, intellection or representation, is a more comprehensive process than presentation. The judgment process develops a judgment more far reaching than is the initial judgment of rational presentation. The latter, although conscious, is arrived at subconsciously; the former is wholly conscious. But if two planes of judgment, may there not be a third? Upon search we find that there are three, and that they evolve one out of the other in a certain sequence, a peculiar rhythm; so that we are compelled to recognize the progressive production of judgments as a distinct process in its own right, still another dimension of time.

The first class of judgments, that on the plane of presen-

tation, is particular; we customarily call this common sense. The common sense judgment accepts uncritically the evidence of the senses, indeed recognizes no other evidence; it converts percept into concept, immediate presentation into knowledge. Its function is analogous to that of a jury in our trial courts: its judgment is upon the facts of a moment already past, its direction plainly regressive.

The second class of judgments, representative judgment, scarcely passes upon fact but rather on the forms of fact and their believable interrelations. It analyzes each concept into its abstract elements; accepts and rejects from among these according to the mind's fund of pre-established categories; reassociates the selected elements again into a construct, a sum of now generalized parts, which it presumes to validate. It lays claim to value and to criticize, but this is mere pretension: true criticism is not based on analysis, rather is it formative, creative. The function of the representative judgment oddly parallels that of a trial judge in any of our lower courts: its judgment is formal, digressive, general.

Judgment upon a third plane, a sort of court of review, we come upon as incidental to the conscious action process. We were able to analyze action into three periods, each of which develops its own peculiar judgment. The judgment of the first period of action, that of conditions precedent, is no more than a rationalization of the particular presented conditions, a regressive judgment which we may describe as common sense. The judgment of the second action period, the cause, is however a representative judgment that analyzes the several concepts of conditions into their abstract elements, to select from among these and reassociate again into one general, rationalized whole, a construct, which we name the cause. The interval of the common sense judgment was one of three which all together merged into the period of



action's conditions; we find, however, that the interval of the general judgment of the cause corresponds to the entire period of the cause: in other words, the whole of the cause is a judgment—judgment is growing. Is it possible then that the whole of a conscious action concurs with a single organized judgment, this judgment reviewing all three periods of the action to sum up in action's culmination? We grasp intuitively that such is the case. Action is forward-reaching, progressive; judgment upon this third plane is similarly progressive in character reaching forward toward universality. (This is not to say that it achieves or ever can achieve universality, which after all is no more than an idea as to direction hypostatized, but universality is its aim.) This final judgment, universal in character, is inclusive of the particular and the general judgment. We shall name it the critical judgment.

The critical judgment is concurrent with the action process but its terms are not the same, nor are its periods. Its final period is seen to comprehend its entire interval, a part in this singular instance oddly equal in extent and content to the whole. We should not be able to understand, much less credit this, if it were not for our analogy of the courts of our sovereign states: the highest court, while distinct from the lower courts, yet comprehends all the courts of the state. This peculiarity stamps the critical judgment as different, not a mere aspect of the action process but an unmistakable process in itself, another dimension of time, which interpenetrates action and presentation and representation alike.

### *Authentic Patterns of Time, of Evolution, of all Reality*

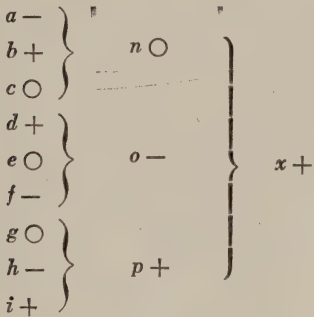
Now that we have analyzed into its integrating series each of the several subprocesses that go to merge finally

into the one vast cosmic process known variously as time, as evolution, as reality, it remains to see how these diverse series fit together to inform ever more magnitudinous intervals; which in turn will enter into series whereas time constantly expands. We need to determine the sequence patterns for such organization and growth. We have already noted that each new emergent unit of time gets determined as to category by the final term of its integrating series; and in this connection we need also take into account the principle of indirection.

Indirection is a controlling principle of the drama, and we shall be dealing with it at some length when we turn our attention to the drama and its timing. But it wants to be understood that indirection applies to the drama only because it applies first of all to life, to time, to all eventuality. The principle stems from recognition that each and every process in life has its own particular moment. Certain processes are long-term, as for instance the education of a son; others are short-term, such as his proclivity towards mischief, or his growing awareness of girls. He'll get into and out of mischief many, many times before ever his education is complete—both with girls and in directions perhaps less educative. Thus the short-term process interrupts the long-term repeatedly, each time to somewhat change its direction; and many other short-term processes will do so likewise; so that the course of eventuality is ever to be seen as a wave line, indirect. We'll be finding that this principle of indirection affects both the incidence and content of recurrent abstract intervals such as here we need consider.

To test this, let us employ graphic symbols to represent the recurrent abstract elements we must deal with, so to follow through more clearly, avoid confusion. A dash (—) say, to stand for the objective, presentative and particular. A cross (+) for the relative reciprocal, representative and

general. A circle (○) for the subjective, active, universal. An action series will take this form: —, +, ○. A presentation series should be represented so: +, ○, —; a representation series so: ○, —, +. And as series merge to take on with each such synthesis a fresh dimension, inform more and more magnitudinous intervals, we are likely to come on some such pattern as this:



The nine intervals of the first column,  $a$  to  $i$  represent atomic intervals;  $n$ ,  $o$ ,  $p$ , will have added a second dimension;  $x$  a third.

To interpret the above diagram and check it: a minute presentation interval,  $a -$ , will be followed by an equally minute representation interval,  $b +$ , succeeded in turn by a similarly minute climactic action interval,  $c \bigcirc$ , the series complete emerging as the brief subjective action,  $n \bigcirc$ , or more properly episode since developed flat, two-dimensioned and no more. Episode  $n \bigcirc$ , from its position in its own series ( $n \bigcirc, o - p +$ ) is seen to be initiatory as well as the active interval of its series, hence it should represent a crisis. And yet its integrating series ( $a -, b +, c \bigcirc$ ) was not that of crisis, an emotional presentation (occasion +, tension ○, suspension —). Obviously something is wrong.

The series  $d +, e \bigcirc, f -$ , which merges into  $o -$ , does correspond with the integrating series of an exposition, which  $o -$  should be if  $n \bigcirc$  is indeed a crisis; but  $g \bigcirc, h -, i +$ , presents the series of a representation or general judgment, not that of a rational presentation or common sense particu-

lar judgment. So again something is wrong. How are we to reconcile matters?

Attention was called earlier to the circumstance that the character of certain crises is more particularly initiatory, others are especially tense, in still others suspense dominates. In the same way an exposition may be particularly sensational, or more matter-of-factly presentative, or point up the attitudes of participants to the situation. In the circumstances of a judgment too, the salient character may be the hopes, the desires of the participants, or the obstacle which occasions doubt and fear, or the composition of hopes and fears, a reconciliation in judgment. All depends on the quality of the interval in its series, whether its character be presentative and particular, representative and general, or subjective and active, as determined by its graphic symbol, — or + or ○.

Myself, I have found it seminally informative toward correct timing of a play, thus taking into account too the principle of indirection, to employ the terms for the syntactical series of crisis, initial mode of presentation, for all initial units of any series other than the main structural series of the play. If the initial interval be relative and general (+), I name it Occasion; if subjective and active (○), I call it Tension; or if objective and particular (—), Suspension. Thus *a* — in our diagram becomes a Suspension; *n* ○ becomes a Tension; *g* ○ a Tension likewise; *d* + represents an Occasion.

For the middle terms of all series other than the main structural series, I like the terms for the integrating intervals of sense perception. While for all final terms other than of the controlling structural series, I use the terms of a rational presentation. Thus *b* + becomes an Attitude and *o* — a Presentation; *c* ○ gets renamed Obstacle and *p* + Desire. Occasion, Sensation, Composition, become the respective terms for *d* +, *e* ○, *f* —; while *g* ○, *h* —, *i* +, translate themselves



into Tension, Presentation, Desire. The emergent unit  $x +$  would represent an Occasion, an Attitude or maybe Desire, depending on its position in any more fully developed series, which in turn must depend on the character of the evolving event.

Consult the charts diagramming the structures of Drama, Comedy, Tragedy offered on pages 110 to 115 and see how the rhythm patterns noted, anything but mechanical, prompt the timing for every subordinate event in a play's structure. This could not be unless the charts follow truly the syntactical pattern of life, of time, of that reality we term evolution. See how all the processes of time interpenetrate one another to develop a major unit presentation or Drama, a major unit representation or Comedy, a major unit action or Tragedy.

### *The Time of Man a Progression*

At the same time the sequences proposed for the various processes of time do not pretend to be absolute. How should it be that events of different orders within a multi-dimensioned continuum could be related to one another in one unalterably ordered series? Or even events of the same order as viewed within the frame of a many ordered whole, how are we to say that the order we note is inherently theirs? We can not say. Possibly sequence has no bearing in connection with the actual flow of events and what we regard as pattern is imposed by our own senses in the act of perceiving. Even so, we should be repaid for our pains in investigating such patterns since, if no more, we would be shedding light upon the processes of perception.

Practically, however, it makes little difference whether sequence belongs to the flow of events or only to our cognitions of events. Here is the way events make themselves

known to us and we must act accordingly. There can be no profit questioning the order we find; we might better question what constitutes an event. And how else shall we describe it but as a plexus of fibers of various processes, all weaving in different directions, which in the event cross and inweave and interrupt each other to knot into an appreciable nodule of action, of time? Surely the least event is dimensioned; its elements may be said to subsist, to consist and to persist, all at once. Certain orders of event seem to be connected with each other in series across the grain of time: these are simultaneous, digressive. Others are connected in the relation of before and after, still others in a particularly generative series. A series of any one order ties up as a unit, a more significant event, which at once puts out fresh tendrils of connection to tie up with other similar units into another order of event, more complex, vaster, developing added dimensions. While we are forced to treat the simpler events as if dimensionless points, atoms in the substance of time's structure, this does not mean that they are themselves without structure. Events show variations of character as, in the perspective from which we view them, the strand of this process or of that appears more pronounced in the tie-up; each order of event and its series displays its own peculiar character. Doubtless if looked at from a different perspective the characters of all events should be different. And along with such difference would likewise go changes in the sequence of events, the order of their appearance, much as a time table of trains running between New York and Chicago shows an order of stations the reverse of that for trains from Chicago to New York. All depends upon the angle of perspective; granted that without perspective there could be nothing of order.

In this connection, however, it is to be noted that a perspective position is relatively fixed for us. Man, at least, is constrained to look upon all happening from the standpoint

of action, progressive order. For us time is bent to a synthesis, accretion, a constant forward progression, and nowise subject to deletion or any backward turning. It is idle to question if this is necessarily true of time-in-itself (whatever time-in-itself may be), it is inescapably true for us. And this establishes our perspective on events.

All events that enter into our consciousnesses, no matter what their inherent order or lack of order, are compelled to enter in one order, that of active progression. The sequence patterns of the different orders of event will differ—here is how we may judge that they belong to different orders—but they string themselves together, for us, in a chain extended along one dimension only. Tracing this chain objectively backward, its discrete articulations, multi-dimensioned links, soon disappear in the perspective of distance so that what we make out is no more than a thread. It is such continuity that most informs our common-sense image of time, a time little more than duration.

### *Extra Sensory Perception*

We have represented the series of presentation and of representation in the progressive sequences which their intervals generally seem to follow as ever on the now they enter into our experience. Nevertheless we know from experience that many of our judgments are practically simultaneous with the initial impact of a problem. And yet between crisis, the impact of problem, and judgment upon it, intervenes still another moment, exposition. Such overlapping of interval is to be explained only by the fact that these several moments are ranged cross-sectionally in what for us is the progressive stream of time: theirs is a digressive series. But how is a digressive series to be represented unfailingly in any progressive order?

A more difficult problem still is to represent adequately the regressive series of presentation. Particularly does emotional presentation mock us, intuition. It is not uncommon to find awareness actually outracing the occasion—this in an interval of brief duration, intense emotion—so that the very term intuition carries with it some connotation of prevision. That faculty of current interest to empirical psychologists which they label extra sensory perception, falls under this category, to be sure. Intuition is, however, never more than of occasion developed within the context of the unfolding moment: there never has been authentication of prevision upon a moment genuinely beyond experience. But how are we to translate such a regressive series as presentation offers into an invariable progressive order? We can only do our best. It is enough if there be conveyed some feeling of the solid dimensional character of time; each subject then can fill in the details of its structure according to his own intimate experiences of time.

### *All is Process*

We have been trying to demonstrate that time is at once objective, relative and subjective. It is not simply a medium in which we have our being, it is not alien from being; but time enters into being and being into time: the two are one. Being is reality, and reality is time, and time is action—all are one. Mind as well is one with action and being and reality and time, each but a different aspect of the one vast unfolding process, each the definitive appellation for one of the recurrently dominant sub-processes that go to make up the cosmic whole. This whole, of course, is utter reality, dynamic process, a continual becoming, which men are only beginning to recognize and comprehend under the still dawning category of evolution.



## *Holism*

Sensible things are crystallizations of form engendered by process. The elements of such crystallized forms are not thing but process. To analyze a thing into its elements is not to divide it mechanically into so many parts. A mechanism has parts but never a dynamic unity. To dissect a unity is in effect to destroy it. The human body can nowise be explained by a listing of its essential organs and members. Indeed, what we term organs of the body are scarcely such at all but rather organs of this or that sub-process of the vaster vital process which informs the body complete. These sub-processes interpenetrate each other, and likewise their organs. So we find in the human body blood vessels and nerves, organs of differing function, distinct sub-processes, weaving through stomach and liver and bowels, organs of a totally different sub-process. Do the blood vessels which serve the stomach belong to the stomach or to the circulatory system? To dissect any dynamic whole is an arbitrary procedure and scarcely informative. To analyze the process which informs the whole into its essential sub-processes, and these again, should prove far more enlightening.

The elements of a thing are to be looked for then not within but behind that thing, in the various processes of which the complete process informing the whole is organized. Between the forms that we term its parts and the form of the whole has necessarily intervened a number of evolutions. Forms somehow find a way of unfolding reciprocal significance, presentation develops into representation; and subsequently representation emerges into action—call this marriage. Action generates presentation again, process tangible form. One, or perhaps many such cycles are the only firmly warranted connection between a whole and what we mistakenly term its parts—the so-called part is ancestor to the

whole. The whole possesses increased magnitude, additional dimensions. Thus time ever expands, rhythmically, creatively. . . . In this is a brief emendation upon the holist conception of Jan Christian Smuts. Our concept differs from his in that, whereas he proclaims the significance of the whole engendered by dynamic process, we stress beyond this the significance of dynamic process achieving the whole. It is process that is ultimate reality.

### *The Fallacy of Foreordination, of Determinism*

We have been describing time in terms of rhythm and not at all in terms of change. We are forced to this inasmuch as change not yet experienced possesses no terms; passed into experience it loses its immediate character of change to identify itself with rhythm. But it can not be too strongly urged that rhythm and change are nowise one and the same: rhythm is determined, change is not.

Considering the cycle of man's life—a regressive survey such entails—we may note the rhythm of it. The normal life span resolves itself into three seasons. The first of these, which we call youth, is the season of occasion, the shaping of attitudes, desires, of entering into relation with environment. The second, ripe maturity, is the season of action on environment, of tension, sensation, the meeting and overcoming of obstacles. Last comes old age, passive, the season of suspension of activities, of presentation, composition, reconciliation to the circumstance that one's self and one's environment are still and forever must be two things apart. And these three seasons of old age, youth and maturity, would seem to run fairly equal in duration; in the case of no man's full development less than twenty-one years each season, in none much over thirty, indicating a natural human life span ranging from sixty-three years to ninety-odd. Our identification of

man's life as a single series in presentation rhythm is supported further by the obvious character of its secondary rhythm, inasmuch as each of our three seasons of life resolves itself into three action periods of seven, eight, nine, or ten years interval, the first of which is recognizable as conditioning, the second as causal, the third climactic. Certainly youth, maturity and old age are seen to culminate each in its final period. One gets the feeling that it should be feasible to analyze such seven to ten year periods further into their constituent rhythms, when we have assurance that the pattern of such series must disclose itself as crisis, exposition, complication. And these two to three year intervals might be resolved in turn, and the series of each lesser span; until it would logically seem to follow that, given clue to the specific periodicity of any individual, possibly the star under which he was born, it ought to be possible to forecast with precision the quality of every moment of his life, declare his horoscope. And certainly the occasional hits registered by some of our less commercial astrologers invites the open-minded to concede that "there may be something in it."

But of course, this is purest nonsense. Looking back upon any life lived, and so already determined, upon any period of time unfolded, it becomes possible to distinguish its pattern. This does not privilege us, however, to look forward upon young life to foretell its manifold future changes. Its changes remain unpredictable, a product of chance and of will much more than of prior conditions. Destiny is the name we fondly give to the pattern of a life, forgetting that life takes on its pattern in the living of it. The reading of destiny into a life is the business of hindsight, never of foresight.

### *The Future*

And yet, for all that, it is needed to forecast the future. A sufficient reason for dissatisfaction with the category of

causality is that it is scarcely a dependable instrument for prognosticating what is to come. The very good reason for all studies of the past is to shed light on future happening. This very examination into the nature of time should prove vain labor unless it may somehow give man an increased power upon his future. Then is it anyway possible to take hold upon the future? But first we better consider just what we mean by the term.

We have identified time with action; it follows then that what has not yet entered into action can not belong to time. The future does not belong to time. Time extends from whatever beginnings we may choose to refer to up to and to include the now. Time is determined. But it does not extend beyond the now, and this must remain undetermined. Reality at this point comes to its end—or had we better say that here it needs pause to renew itself actively. Beyond the now stretches endlessly the realm of all unreality, of chance and doubt and will. And it is this which we name the future. Instead of being a division of time the future is time's antithesis.

But still common sense, and the general judgment no less, will continue to envision time as comprehending the future, the future continuous with present and past. In mechanics we are even able to treat it so, for the most part satisfactorily. We need to remind ourselves constantly, however, that such time is merely conceptualized time. It is not real. It is specifically two-dimensioned relative time. It is an easy idea of time useful to serve reciprocal relations. But it is only idea. It is esthetical, it is logical, while distinctly non-ethical. It represents past and present reduced to idea fused to our idea of the future. Remember that the future is never anything more than idea. As such we assume to unravel it through exercise of logic. This means to conceive the future as reciprocal reaction. Whereas we very well know that every



fresh interval as it enters into time is bound to manifest itself to us as action.

The not-too-distant future, that which we are particularly keen to know, belongs to action-in-process. The term future when at all legitimately applied stands for our idea of the content of the interval that must go to the completion of an action in hand; beyond this the term is scarcely meaningful. It acquires definite meaning as the idea behind it comprehends a resolute plan for that action. Under such circumstance the future may almost be foretold. For the future is never a matter of what-is-to-be, no such thing is nor ever can be; rather is it our visual concept of what we through our actions even now are bringing to fruition. As such it is personal to each of us, subjective in highest degree. Unreal, a fiction, it is yet the darling possession of every man and woman and child. Who is there that fails to give it glowing form in fond hopes and dreams and prayers? We are impatient everyone to taste it.

An idea, nothing more than idea, the future is the most alluring idea ever mind conceived. Man arrived at it first through recognition of his own purpose. The meaning of future then, its ultimate meaning still today, is the conceived-of-moment of fulfillment of purpose. Faithfulness to purpose durst be assumed to assure fulfillment; faith in purpose contributes to fulfillment. Mind of itself has no power upon the future but only as forethought unfolds itself into definite action. It is action that is prophetic.

Action, which is reality, which is time, is engendered by purpose, which in turn means tension towards fulfillment. The general aspect of action, time, is characterized by an innate striving of each and every subject, even the least, toward self-completion. Only, today we are wont to term this process evolution. Time and evolution are one and the

same. They represent alike the general aspect of action the universal, of reality the particular.

Self-completion lies ever ahead. Evolution and time unfold then through tension towards a future, toward ideal, not at all by reason of any pressure from the past. The idea of pressure as anywise operative in time, in short our general category of forces, falls definitely under suspicion. And this is to be construed to apply to coercion in the moral sphere no less than in mechanics.

### *Ethics*

This is to recognize time, evolution, reality, as in essence an ethical process. It is not needful to conceive of an anthropomorphic godhead to account for the function of ethics in man's life, his time. Indeed, belief in an omniscient, omnipotent, willful divinity may even becloud its function. For such faith can very well lead to acceptance of the insidious doctrine of foreordination, Providence—fate.

We have learned that the least conscious interval of time is possessed of magnitude, dimension, adding further dimension as it merges with similar intervals into time units of ever greater magnitude. It extends regressively, which is to say passively, particularly, into its relative past; coincidentally, reactively, digressively, upon its immediate now; intending progressively and actively, purposively, toward a sometime future. Time is change: we so identify it; and change may be seen to possess three distinct aspects in keeping with the three fundamental dimensions of time. Regressively looked at, so earlier we noted, our term for change is rhythm. Experienced on the now, which is to say digressively, we know it rather for novelty of experience—whether a welcome novelty or otherwise is here beside the point. Whereas intending progressively it becomes altogether one with chance.

Chance in turn has its three aspects. Traced backward, and particularly so when chances have been sadly missed, we self-deluding, alibiing humans are prone to call it destiny or fate. Both digressively as of the now and intending progressively toward a future, our favored term for chance is luck—good luck or bad. Only the man of purposed action takes hold upon it rather as opportunity, each chance his freshly to do.

Fate, luck, opportunity, describe the dimensional aspects of chance, of change, of time itself. The well-defined, passive and particular; the relative, reciprocal and general; the subjective, active, universal. Or more commonly we term these fundamental dimensions: past, present and future, even while aware that the future is not, is merely anticipated. Experience tells us that we may expect the future when it does arrive, to be the function of our present and past.

### *Value*

It is to be remarked that without this idea of function, of progressively changing active relation, value itself means nothing. For it represents an increment developing out of action, or else it is an empty term. On the other hand, the traditional scheme of causality can find no genuine place for value, nor for any increment, but only for a relentless entropy.

Value is action's function. The function of presentation is beauty, that of representation truth. We shall be devoting much attention to truth and to beauty later on when we try to apply to the drama what we believe we have learned about action and time: perhaps it would not be amiss to make a brief investigation into value here. But first we need to consider these three distinct functions together.

Often it has been maintained that beauty and truth are

forms of value, that they are values; but such does not precisely accord with fact. Value is an ethic, beauty an esthetic, truth a logic function. It is true that there can be no beauty where there is not value first, nor truth where beauty does not abide, nor value without truth antecedent; but this is no more than to say that, as already we have noted, representation emerges into action, action into presentation, presentation again into representation. Reality is multi-dimensioned. Beauty, truth and value offer an abstract of its dimensions. Just as well action rhythm might be called ethic or value rhythm; presentation rhythm is only another name for esthetic or beauty rhythm; representation signifies truth or logic rhythm.

Beauty and truth and value are neither properties nor qualities—they do not inhere in anything. They are dynamic functions abstracted by man's mind from the process of reality. They are relative to one another and to man, while subjective to man. But value is the more subjective since it is active; beauty the more objective, being passive; truth is ever relative, reciprocal. We shall be able to recognize these distinctions better when we delve into beauty and truth more deeply; for the moment let us center all attention on value.

Value like purpose looks to a future. It measures not so much a good realized as one in hand to be realized later. "One can not eat his cake and have it too"; eaten, digested, it is value no longer. Value signifies an increment painfully gained through action, a fund which may be spent at will to promote fresh action—or indeed, it permits of being merely spent, dissipated.

A positive value is such as furthers action on intention looking to further increment. When specifically so employed we name it a capital good. It may even further intention, as is the central idea of our great ethical religions. A negative value is whatever obstructs action. So that value is to be seen



as instrumental. As intention changes value changes with it: there can be no eternal values. Values are created, on intention, by intention, for intention. They are ours to create and establish and increase.

There is no radical difference between spiritual and commercial values, simply that the one class tends to fasten upon concrete objects or services of more or less general use. Obviously the life of this class of values can not extend beyond that of the objects they are bound up with. The other class is more highly subjective, at once more subtle and more lasting. But genesis is much the same for both classes: all values indifferently are human values. Let us just glance at commercial values, nearer to hand and so more readily examined than the so-called higher values.

It should be plain that any commodity or service has positive value in time and place for profitable use. It is use, projected use, which mothers value. Out of its proper relation of usefulness that article or service becomes, at best, a nuisance, at worst an instrument of tragedy. For instance, the beard on the face of man in a clean-shaven era: what is this but dirt, a nuisance? On the other hand, a razor in the hands of a three-year old child. Which ought to make abundantly clear that the value of anything is not intrinsic to that thing but inheres in the relation that the thing holds to use upon occasion. Hence value can never be an objective factor but instead, a subjectively attributed quality and a relative quantity entirely. As a relative quantity it admits of being represented in relative terms, as for instance, whatever the current medium of exchange.

Quantitatively value is a measure of the state of relation of anything to man. As this relation changes value has to change. Soap to wash the face and hands of a youthful jam jar explorer possesses definite value, but let the suds get into that little fellow's eyes and its value sinks at once to a minus

quantity. Value is begotten in the act of bringing a commodity or service into relation with man and his needs, into use. This act of relation is the act of selling. Selling sires value.

Not production produces value; production produces only products. Such products are valueless unless produced to demand, which means, to use already excited by selling. In such case they are at once risen from the ranks of mere product to be classed henceforth as commodities. Or products may acquire a value not theirs initially if subsequent selling is able to introduce them into use, or to extend their use. In any case the part of the producer, as such, in the creation of value is negligible.

Modern economists try to draw a distinction between use value and what they term exchange value. Use value, which they recognize as fundamental, they correctly trace to use; but for the genesis of exchange value they seek rather far afield. One derives it from cost of production, another from cost of reproduction, a third develops an interminable thesis about what he describes as surplus value. All of which is nonsense. Value derives from use alone. But to the middleman the prime use of commodities is for exchange, hence the value to him will be a function of exchange and not of actual use. Seasonable goods, other things being equal, will command a higher exchange value than unseasonable goods. The subjective factor of style may be expected to enter into the exchange value of commodities more insistently than into their primary use value: good style sells easier though it need not necessarily serve actual use any better. In no case does exchange value apply to products but only to commodities, which is to say, products whose use, and so whose value, already has been established by selling-to-use. Selling-to-exchange bears much the same relation to selling-to-use as

exchange value does to use value: use value and selling-to-use are controlling. If for one reason or another exchange value be boosted above a reasonable index for use value the public simply curtails its buying-to-use and exchange value has got to suffer. Cost of production has no bearing whatever on exchange value in such case, nor cost of reproduction, while certainly the idea of surplus value explodes into thin air when commodities have to be sacrificed to move them. The middleman in providing a market for the unforced flow of commodities from production into general use performs a needed service in our, or any, social-economic scheme. His job is no sinecure. Under conditions of reasonable competition he is clearly entitled to his share in the increment derived out of selling to use, what he calls his profit—if he can get it.

### *Economics Genuinely a Department of Ethics*

The higher the value the more subjective, hence less relative, less capable of being represented adequately in terms of exchange. For all that, it has sometime been remarked that every man has his price, meaning that at some point even his dearest values may be held alienable in exchange; and while this can scarcely be maintained as universally true it does accord close enough to common experience as to be generally conceded. The higher values tend to fasten not on concrete objects but on intangibles, on relations such as those of husband and wife, parents and children, and on sentiments like love of country, desire for honor, predilection toward truth or toward beauty. (Beauty and truth are not values but a penchant for either is.) All such values kindle intention, provide incentive for further action. Values that transcend sentiment to partake of the nature of intention itself, such as faith, hope, charity, love

of fellowmen impersonally, are recognized as the loftiest values of all. These last are so highly subjective that they, if any, are beyond the chance of alienation in exchange.

But yet even these most spiritual values are born out of use. They are empty terms unless they are employed. And so they need to be sold to use: this last is religion's function. It is religion's prime function. The glorification or appeasement of a traditional godhead is no essential part of religion—that belongs to magic.

There is none with power over man's future save man himself; man's responsibility derives from his freedom. To teach otherwise is to spread a corrupt ethic. So that if urgent need be felt for a god it should be at least equally needful to look for him, not outside of but within man, in his purpose which some inner compulsion leads him ever to set above himself.

Time does not develop along straight unbroken lines. It is not propagated in lines at all but shows a general quickening, germinating action in every direction at once. It is not mere duration. It is not alone duration and coexistence square to each other. It is three-dimensioned and more, along with duration and co-existence, action an essential extension. The critical judgment besides. While these basic processes expanding, dynamically working in and through each other, generate new and ever wider temporal processes, further dimensions of time.

Time is one with reality, a dynamic reality. Evolution is but another name for time.



# Time and the Drama

Twenty-three centuries ago Aristotle treated of time. He pronounced variously that time is "the number of movement," and "due to the motion of the sphere." Elsewhere he pointed out the essential pattern of the cardinal rhythm of tragedy. Nowhere did he betray the slightest glimmer of recognition that he was more adequately describing time in the latter case than in the former. His remarks upon tragedy were by way of noting the practices of the great Greek tragedians, above all Sophocles, whose keen sense of time thus may be seen to anticipate the substance of our reasoned observations on time by thousands of years. By so much does cognition run before recognition. The less pronounced minor rhythms of time which Sophocles must have felt since he regarded faultlessly, Aristotle was unable to detect; at any rate, he never mentioned them. Instead, the wise man did what foolish men are prone to do: he dissected the body of the living organism into its lifeless members, attaching names to this part and to that, by which hocus pocus—as mechanism and not as process—he assumed to explain the dynamic whole.

During the past twenty-three centuries numberless plays have been written and produced, a handful of great plays. Aristotle remains still the outstanding authority on dramatic

structure. Playwright after playwright has sat at his feet and all have had an equal share in him, no one more so than any other. That a very few have excelled signifies that these few sensed more than the Stagirite was equipped to teach. Certainly the great plays are seen to possess this one particular feature, that they evince throughout their sequences a superior sense of time, of timing.

The quality of Shakespeare's verse, never in this world surpassed, testifies to his delicate sense of rhythm, of time. But Shakespeare's greatness does not rest upon his verse alone, nor even chiefly; his plays bear witness to a progressively developing awareness of time's dimensional structure. It must have been due to conscious seeking on his part, inasmuch as his later work exhibits less and less concern with the surface patterns of verse, more and more for the deep underlying rhythms of structure to lend his drama dimension. That's why his characters come alive; the characters of the best of his contemporaries remain lifeless while merely violent. Shakespeare's plays, and particularly his later ones, are not flat like, for instance, Marlowe's, but are developed in the round.

Correct structure of the drama, indeed of every order of creative work of man, is implicated in a clear understanding of the nature of time, of timing. But it waits for us to make this explicit. We need to demonstrate just how the principles we have laid bare apply to the drama specifically. So first of all we require to consider what the drama is, what its place is in man's life.

### *The Drama and Its Place*

For an historical survey one needs go far back indeed. No race, no tribe of man known to us, so primitive but what

it employs some form of dramatic presentation well defined. *Pithecanthropus erectus* had his drama, we dare judge, inasmuch as we see very much earlier creatures betray an urge to dramatize themselves. Not alone mammals and birds and insects but even crustacea enter into ceremonies at time of mating, conditioning dances they seem to us, showing much in common with our drama. We can scarcely hope to probe the institutions of such lesser creatures since we can nowise get at their mental processes to learn how they interpret these rites. We are forced to begin with man. We must begin with man when he began.

Man, we are fond of saying, is a thinking animal. To think is specifically to ponder relations, to inquire into these and generalize upon them. It is safe to assume that the first man thought, birds and mammals do that, only our furred and feathered cousins have not so much as we to think about. But when man emerged as man to embark upon a career of purpose it became his purpose to conquer the domain of thought in which the lesser creatures idly browse. As soon as he discovered purpose he found it needful to pause and assimilate the idea consciously, explain it to himself.

The sequence of events could only have been, a sustained crisis first: occasion followed by tension and later suspension, throughout which intention would not yet be risen to consciousness. At this stage intention would be of the nature of desire, subconscious, vague, not fastened definitely upon an object. The direction in which it was pointed, however—we can have scant doubt of this—was toward that awful fascination which fire holds for man and beast alike. . . . To reconstruct what likely happened we need only read the record of events upon this earth for the past million years or so as written in the rocks, at the same time bearing in mind the well-known temper of man, imperious, arrogant.

## *Conquest of Fire—The Emergence of Man*

During the rigors of one of earth's great ice ages, the onset of frigidity occasion for but another of terrestrial life's recurrent seminal crises, a herd of naked anthropoids should have found refuge and some degree of comfort within caves pitting the sides of a volcanic mountain. They would be able to recognize, of course, that the warmth they welcomed emanated from the fiery monster thrusting tentacles up above the mountain's crest, its turbulent disposition further attested to by the constant rumbling threats they might hear deep behind the walls of their cavern. So should be set up a conflict within the psyche of each member of that band, at once drawn toward the crater's brink by curious interest and warned away by dread. This inner conflict would find its normal outward expression in a tacit rivalry, among the males at least, which one durst dare the closest to the awful pit.

Exposition follows: attitude—at once established as noted just above—and sensation and presentation; in other words, particularizing experience, during which latent desire should for the first time be cognized as wish, certainly not yet conscious will or purpose.

We can imagine how surely the day must come when one male more braggart than the rest, perhaps, should advance—or maybe be pushed mischievously by his mates—to the crater's very edge. On the way up the mountainside he should forehandedly have torn off a seared tree branch with which to threaten the raging adversary, vie with him, which might most terrify the other. In this branch he should catch fire. Now down the mountainside he bounds bearing his flaming brand. The other males are quick to follow his example. They dance about in triumph flourishing their blazing banners—many no doubt are seriously burned. When no longer



to be borne the brands are tossed together in a heap around which the whole clan dances: the first communal bonfire. Lo! the impossible, unthinkable thing has happened. For the first time is cognized that a wish to do just this has all along been latent there within their hearts.

Later would come judgment: in series, desire and obstacle and composition. The specific desire at this point would be no more than to perform the same hazardous intoxicating ceremony again—and again—coupled doubtless with that innate human bias to surpass what another has done before. The obstacle remains a dread of fire. Composition between this obstacle and latent desire should then yield recognized conscious wish.

But not yet purpose. Merely the seed of purpose. Wish is desire made conscious, purpose is wish become active. There likely were engendered any number of recurrent minor crises with their occasions, tensions, suspensions; any number of developing partial expositions with their attitudes, sensations, presentations; and judgments groping betwixt desire and obstacle to spurious compositions—a whole great action cycle engendered before ever there should be a critical revealing judgment. This could not possibly come before action. Not till fire had been more or less subdued to man's will. With which experience man acquired at least some vague idea of active will or purpose, of action itself, while along with these, an incipient idea of futurity too. But rationalization comes slowly, painfully, and only after repeated involvement in spurious compositions, dilemmas. Trial and error is the method of judgment. Endless repetition is scarcely enough to serve this digressive faculty.

Yet still the sequences presented in our skeleton remain: first crisis, even though possibly an uncounted number of minor crises germinating through expanding action periods and cycles into one major crisis of consciousness; and ex-

position, repeated expositions while changing attitude slowly induced completer sensation, sharper presentation; and finally a critical judgment, if only after a lengthy series of makeshift compositions; so that at long last purpose was half-way conscious in this world and man was born.

### *Action and Passion—Magic*

Man's ideas are strictly reactions to his actions: we learn by doing. What is simple to do is quickly learned, but the deeper, more abstract concepts are a harvest from vastly extended complex action. Just as we have earlier seen that actions tend to merge into each other, integrating new action wholes of ramified complexity, so our simple ideas tend too to sprout, rooting deep and deeper in the direction of universality. Ideas serve toward action and are stimulated anew through action. So that having gained an incipient concept of action the mind of man was opened to expanding ideas of action. But it must not be forgotten that complex action demands time, and any recognition of action involves repetition and still more time, and the distillation of its essence and representation as idea, again more time; so that it may be well understood that the period of gestation for an abstract universal concept can stretch to an interval of thousands, indeed tens of thousands of years.

We are forced to assume that earliest man had conceived some idea of action, only it would be folly to suppose that this was at all the concept which the term signifies to our minds today. We may judge from observations upon current primitives that he could not genuinely distinguish between purpose and mere wishing. He certainly did sense the rhythm of action, even if dimly, although he remained unable to rationalize and represent this adequately. He envisioned a future the sum of all potentialities yet still not differentiated

from but rather pervasive of present and past. And potentiality which he termed *mana* he rationalized as coextensive with his desires and his fears. He saw action as one unresolved event, yet a polarized event, and he called the positive pole action while its negative he termed passion. He recognized vaguely that action determines the future; only it was not so much his own action, subjective as this is, which claimed his notice as it was what he considered to be the action of environment upon himself, for this remained objective to his senses. However, the relation between action and passion is such an intimate one, so he observed, like passion being associated recurrently with like action, that he craftily conceived through commanding the aspects of passion he might enforce control over action, and so upon *mana*. Thus man rationalized out and invented sympathetic magic very early in his career.

But yet this magic was purposive, an instrument for his subjective action on environment. All things were conceived in terms of action, which is to say in terms of spirit. Primitive man read spirit even into inert things, for could not these make him suffer. If his was a passive role in relation to this tree which had fallen to crush his body, it could only be because the tree had been active and purposeful. The whole world became to him a complex of purposes. Animism was his first philosophy antedating the most primitive religious practice, coloring this to persist through a vast succession of changes in his slowly evolving religious faith. He rationalized each happening, good or bad as it affected him, as a project of this friendly or that spiteful spirit. In such manner, reasoning a posteriori, he somewhat objectified purpose as responsibility, present responsibility equating with past action, and so he laid early foundation for what should after vast ages develop into his category of causality. But now to safeguard his own responsibilities he prescribed for himself rules of conduct. These at first were merely limitations, inhibitions,

*tabu*, negative rules of conduct; but still it should be clear that from his earliest beginnings man has looked on life as distinctly of ethic order.

### *Value—One of the Earliest Distinctly Human Ideas*

The first creature of earth to project thought into action, forethought into organization for action, was man. Primitive man invented weapons and tools as instruments of his purpose. This is not to say that conscious purpose came before the first use of weapons or tools; rather is it presumable that effective use of chance sticks and stones occasioned, after the fact, those primary rationalizings that brought intention and instrumentality alike into the open to render these conscious. But not till man was conscious of intention was he secure in his possession of the use of tools. Certainly before he chipped his first flint by intention he must have owned a working concept of intention. And so the instruments which he fashioned with his hands, if not the chance weapons that he found ready to hand, were invested with his subjective purpose. However, any reasoned idea of the subjective is well beyond the powers of a primitive mentality to handle—it is difficult enough for us, goodness knows! Recognizing that his artifacts were invested with some special virtue early man ascribed this to the objectively conceived, convenient *mana*. He regarded his instruments as magical and he saw a friendly or a perverse spirit in every artifact. And so he gave personal names to his tools and weapons, a custom from which to this day we have not entirely departed. But however he rationalized to explain it, whether as magical property, animating spirit, or what, the virtue that he recognized and sought to account for in the instruments he made and used was what we describe in our day as value.



Or should we better say function? Function signifies instrumental purpose, surrogate for active purpose. Value is just a bit more distantly removed, we might fairly define it as a function of function. Certainly prior to any recognition of value there must be some recognition of function. Both ideas are difficult to deal with by reason of their complexity. For while they pertain properly to ethic order, action, their hidden roots dig back into logic and their allusions point forward unmistakably into esthetic order. They are dynamic ideas.

### *Industry*

With the first flint chipped by intention man was embarked upon his long career as artist. He was equipped now with a number of rudimentary yet distinctly human ideas which later he should develop, refine and build upon: purpose and instrumentality and value. At once he began to fashion things with regard to their instrumental purposes, their functions. Doubtless at first he merely sought to improve instruments found ready to hand, sticks and stones and shells and bones, lopping off such elements as contributed not at all but interfered rather with functional effectiveness. Later he studied forms more closely, what forms might serve him best, and he set himself to change the forms of things according to his purpose. So he became active on his instruments, and this is industry. Let it be noted right here that although an activity, industry is not action. For while the artisan sets himself to change something, it is not the relation of the thing to himself that he seeks to change; this relation is described already in the function of the instrument. All that industry changes is concrete objective form. Industry is activity belonging to esthetic order.

## *Beauty*

Through industry man came upon and slowly made his own a further categorical concept, that of pattern or design. Through design he might best integrate function into form. He laid the foundation early for a sound working esthetic in which form and function were given equal place. Sans form function is bodiless spirit, even to this day; sans function form is meaningless and void; function must needs inform form, whereupon the two merge into one character, that of beauty. But while form is a simple category of esthetic order function belongs to ethic order along with value. We are forced to conclude then that the esthetic can not be completed as it is in a thing of beauty, unless that thing is first informed with ethic, and that every artifact or fashioned form with function is necessarily a time structure of two dimensions.

All of which is interesting, even important one might say, but what has it got to do with the drama? Evidently we got started off in a wrong direction somehow. We better go right back and begin over again with man at his beginnings.

## *Social Activity—Communication*

Man is not merely a thinking animal as earlier remarked, but even before this he is a social one. His ancestors must have been social, their more remote forebears no less. It is questionable whether any creature not social ever could have attained to self-consciousness. For if conscious thought signifies the pondering of relations, surely it would have been relations within the social group that furnished mind with its daily dozen of concrete problems, immediate and pressing, to exercise and develop itself upon.

But enough of thought. It is not thought but social activity, in any case, that affords mind its most active expression. Thought is a process of reactivity, digressive: social activity is progressive. It is holistic, serving to integrate society, the group. And social activity is, specifically, communication. The drama comes under this category: communication.

Doubtless emotions, images of familiar percepts, simple ideas, are communicable through instinctive action, as when a dog barks all the neighborhood dogs take up the refrain seeming to sense the occasion. The attitude of any creature of the higher orders induces a like or else counter attitude in any other creature of the same or kindred order sensibly nearby. The behavior of our first dog may have been merely the subconscious reaction to some stimulus presented, but the behaviors of the others can only be attributed to more or less conscious representations of this stimulus: whether these representations are adequate or not remains beside the point. For while the barking of the first dog starts as reaction to, it ends up as initial representation of the stimulus; and though the precise nature of the stimulus may or may not be conveyed, a stimulus of some sort at least is made understood. Complete understanding, of course, depends on the adequacy with which the reciprocal representation instigated in any other mind corresponds to the stimulus, the presentation behind the initial representation.

From this it is easy to recognize communication as a function of two or more different yet reciprocal representations, understanding being conditioned on the faithfulness in correspondence of all secondary representations to the original presentation. Obviously communication is a process of digressive duplication, a sub-process of representation which is itself digressive. The instrument of communication is the symbol.

## *The Symbol*

A symbol is a presentation, an objective and sensible form, while at the same time a sidelong reference to the representation of an original presentation privy to the mind of the first party to the communication. A presentation representing the representation of a distinctly different presentation, it is a digress reciprocal to the original presentation. As a sensible form it admits of conveyance to a second party or parties to the communication, of being presented to them, by whom it is to be reinterpreted as representation, which must again be referred back to conceptualized prior presentation or personal past experience, to be at all understood. The process is highly involved but, being digressive, it requires only the briefest active interval of time—cuts across time. In form then, the symbol is a unit, but in its essence, that of reference, it is a plurality. It is at once many and one. Clearly it is a time structure of two dimensions, presentation and representation, form and reference, esthetic and logic. Like artifact and yet unlike. For whereas artifact is active function incorporated into form, symbol is passive form dissipated as reciprocal reference.

Man did not invent nor first discover the symbol. Its employment far down the scale of life, as in the mating dances of innumerable insects, the flash of the firefly, is one of the certain evidences vouchsafed us of the primitive beginnings of a representation process and function. But man refined and improved the symbol; above all other creatures he has exploited it. Through purposed use he has made it peculiarly his own, his premier tool and instrument.

Symbols referring to simple objects admit of being grouped and arranged in a syntactical order, so to determine complex wholes of which the simple objects are the obvious conditioning elements. The dance, a series of attitudes in



rhythmic succession, is readily understood to refer to the action or whole series of actions which it imitates. Probably in the dance man essayed his earliest groupings and syntheses of simple ideas into ideas of wider reference. But more and more he came to use articulate vocalizations besides. He attached specific oral symbols to all things, and these were names, and he marveled at the power which names gave him over things. Naturally he regarded his symbols as magical, and he employed them in his magic. The importance attaching to the magic spell attests to the power man attributed to his vocal symbols. And certainly the instrumentality of a wealth of symbols did give man facility in ideation, power over thought, so that his mind expanded rapidly.

### *Truth*

Now, the representation process to which communication belongs is a reciprocal process mediate between presentation and action. It ever refers back to objective presentation, on the one hand, and on the other infers forward to subjective action. In every representation some germ of intention is to be looked for, and it is this which determines meaning. Meaning is a correlate to belief, to forward looking faith, quite other from knowledge which merely refers back to prior presentation. An objective presentation is no more than a fact; facts are, are accepted as sensibly given, and so we know them; and this is all there is to say about them. They remain impersonal and changeless and meaningless and dead. But as an idea intends toward action, becomes subject to belief or disbelief, it genuinely takes on meaning. Meaning, and so belief, is a function of representation, its social, active and progressive function; and meaning in turn is the condition of truth. Truth, like value, is function of the func-

tion of the process to which it belongs, its utmost reach and end. Directly beyond truth stretches action.

There can be no truth without meaning, nor without belief or else disbelief; nor can there be error without meaning, nor without disbelief or else belief; meaning and belief condition truth and falsity. Simple ideas operating in the region of representation's objective pole possess little of truth since their correspondence in the main is to fact and their content of action intent is slight. But as ideas arrange themselves syntactically to integrate more and more complex wholes, an orderly communication, persons privy to such communication endow this with subjective intent and meaning, and so truth or falsity in greater or less degree. The meaning will vary from person to person according to his subjective need, and so necessarily its truth. Neither truth nor error belongs to fact, nor even to idea as idea, but either is a predicate of the relation of the idea to a subject. What is error to one subject may well spell truth to another. If we keep in mind that as a function of meaning truth is a matter of degree we can only conclude that there is nothing eternal nor absolute about it.

Generally truth has received consideration not as function but as condition of meaning, which leads straight into numberless, profitless dilemmas.

### *Gifts*

A very obvious communication, at once simple and complex, is artifact employed as symbol. Gifts are readily recognizable, and recognized by mankind throughout the ages, as symbolic of the giver's intention. A knife is regarded as an unlucky token still today, likewise an empty purse, while a young man's bestowal of a ring upon the young lady of his fancy is conceived of as sealing his promise of endless devo-

tion. Its possibilities of use, sometimes even its form, supply plain meaning to the artifact as symbol. We have already seen that artifact is a time structure of two dimensions, function and form, value and beauty, and now as symbol it acquires still a third extension: meaning, truth. It should be pointed out, however, that in so doing it is apt to suffer some abridgement in respect of its active function, use. A silver loving cup engraved with sentiments appropriate to its occasion is probably never to be used for drink, but its active is sunk completely in its symbolic function.

### *Fine Art*

But it is not the number of its time dimensions that determines the quality of anything, rather the degree to which these carry. Having function and suitable form, we saw, an artifact takes on beauty: it does not acquire greater beauty for being employed as symbol; what it does acquire is meaning in greater or less degree. As artifact it is a product of art. But when its form is endowed with meaning, and ultimately truth, and to the degree that it is so endowed, we know it for a product of fine art. Its form is now merged in its meaning, it holds truth beyond its beauty. Beauty at best is but a secondary character of fine art, truth is the essence or it is not fine art. For fine art is achievement in communication.

Let us underscore that communication is the entire function of the fine arts. The permanent value of the symbols employed contributes perhaps to the permanence of the communication but nothing at all to its truth, its essential quality as fine art. The dilettante will scarcely care to accept this. He wishes to look upon fine art as self-expression merely. That's because he is frightened before his problem. For the message has to be got across, its meaning made plain; it must force people to believe, convert them to its truth, before ever it

becomes fine art. Fine art is social achievement because truth is social achievement.

A photograph is not fine art inasmuch as it is scarcely selective of meanings. Referring altogether to objective fact, it is readily understood, but it holds nothing for belief or disbelief, no condition for the function truth. On the other hand, the revulsion of many present day painters against careful draftsmanship on the score that photography can render a more faithful likeness in any case, is at once defeatist and a confession of paucity of truthful intent. Good draftsmanship does not of itself make the fine artist, nevertheless affectedly careless draftsmanship can utterly destroy him.

### *Recapitulation*

We are forced to distinguish broadly three levels of the mind's purposed activity. At the bottom the search for correspondences, the relations of objective fact, seeking to apprehend these as objects of knowledge, is the function of the physical sciences. Their end as communication is description, abstraction; their sufficient predicate is coherence. Logic and mathematics generally are at home at mid-level, concerning themselves with the interdependences between abstract relations, pure symbolisms. Their aim as communication is reconciliation, proof, their predicate consistency. The fine arts perform at the mind's highest and social level to get at the subjective meanings of relations. Their aim is to communicate interpretation and so they shoot at its function truth. Fine art regards objective fact but incidentally, and little more even the logic of facts; its overwhelming concern is with meanings. Perhaps the single exception to this rule is history, which while concerned above all else with meanings, seeks to derive these out of the most meticulous attention to detailed facts. The communications of fine art are forever fictions—



and this applies to history too; as such they are endowed with truth or falsity foreign to fact.

As communication, fine art, and the same may be said of truth, is a reciprocal affair. Both parties to the communication are called on to contribute. The artist is not relieved of any measure of his responsibility by this; to the contrary, his responsibility is precisely doubled. For the more he contributes the more he durst expect his public to contribute, and so his cause, the cause of truth, be advanced from two sides at the same time.

Man's oldest fine art form undoubtedly was the dance. To this likely soon was added song. As he developed artifacts he took to embellishing these with magic symbols, and particularly such utensils as he devoted to the tendance of his mighty dead, guardians of his future. Totemic symbols of relation, votive offerings of no immediate utility, magic fertility images, ceremonial and war masks, shrines: all such were essays in communication and essentially fine art forms. In every case the form tended with time to become conventionalized, patterned, and lesser artists painstakingly copied over the intent disclosed by masters, so burying truth in formula. Yet truth grew and continues to grow; and culture bloomed in diverse quarters, and turned to seed to be blown by the winds and spread, to sprout anew elsewhere and bud and bloom again.

### *Poetry*

But truth and the fine arts can lead man only up to action and are nowise potent to see him through it, and action is man's particular ordeal. It is not enough that he shall feel and imagine and think and believe and know, he must intend and do and grasp at a future, and fail or be saved through doing. He has a life to live. Here it is prophecy that comes

to aid, or as we more commonly term it nowadays, poetry.

Poetry is as much concerned with truth as the fine arts are with beauty, and no more: its essential pursuit is social value. Action is its medium. All ethical religion is in substance poetry so that it is no accident that the world's great poets have ever been enlisted in the cause of religion, although constantly on the side of its liberating spirit and against enslaving dogma, its formalized and outworn truths. The poet is primarily the doer, the fearless one who through heroic resolution gains his victory over life; only secondarily is he the artist able to sense and enter into this hero's spirit to communicate his triumph to the world. Prometheus and Herakles, Samson and David, Jesus and Francis of Assisi, Joan of Arc and Lincoln, to name the merest few, were superlative artists who created original poetry patterns for lesser artists to trace.

The good life lived is poetry of the first order, subjective poetry. The good life lived as it presents itself to others is poetry on the objective plane. The good life as revealed through communication becomes poetry on the relative plane, that of representation. It is this last that we refer to usually when we speak of poetry. But the entire significance of poetry is lost to us unless we realize that no communication is ever poetry in itself. Relative at best, it becomes poetry to the degree that it is able to inspire its communicants to the good life, as they make it their subjective own.

Since poetry must first be subjective to its communicator it is widely held to be a function of self-expression. There is truth in this, only it is a relative truth, as all truth is. As subjective action poetry is coextensive with self-expression, naturally, but as communication it falls short unless and until it carries its message across. As communication poetry is a fine art, although at the same time it is something more besides. And while this something more is the essence, never-

theless the communicating poet durst not neglect his responsibility as communicator. His obligation is to command his self-expression to best serve communication.

### *Poetry and Verse*

Any fine art form which at the same time may be made to forward right action becomes an apt medium for communicated poetry. Painting, sculpture, music, more especially architecture and the dance, may be charged with social values. The inescapable condition for whatever medium of poetry would seem to be that it be a rhythmic medium, rhythm providing the universal language that the communicant grasps subconsciously. The content of rhythm is intuited. But this condition is scarcely limiting inasmuch as every fine art form is seen to be a structure of rhythms. Generally, however, the term poetry is taken to refer to vocal symbols in verse arrangement.

Verse is a fine art form, certainly. It may or may not be poetry: it is not poetry per se. No doubt it was so originally, for originally verse was the form reserved for the magic spell. At first the poet, the prophet, signified none other than the incarnate god himself with power upon man's future. This power was exercised through the medium of the magic spell, in verse which, so contributing to action, meant strictest poetry. As religion began by degrees to divorce itself from magic, the godhead in ever growing dignity removing farther and farther off from man, the priest first came to be conceived as surrogate for the god, his living prophet. He no longer had power of himself upon the future, unless as intercessor with the god. Naturally, the priest employed the traditional magical verse form in his communications and intercessions alike: how else should he dignify his message, fill his communicants with awe. And it was needed to awe the

worshippers since man is by nature arrogant, demanding to command his future himself; and one may be sure that the by then relatively advanced ethical communications of the priest were not always to public liking. We read in the Old Testament how one ethically developing community, the Children of Israel, was wont to backslide again and again and revert to magic and the local ba'alim, more amenable to their demands than the distant righteous god. There are records, fragmentary it is true, of other Old World cultural communities contiguous to the Mediterranean, testifying to a three-fold general development about the period of the tenth to the sixth centuries B.C.: the rise of colleges of prophets, magical soothsayers, beside the more ethic-biased priestly caste, on the one hand; of lay prophecy on the other, uncompromisingly ethical, less politic than the official priesthood had need to be; while a phenomenon midway between, we learn of the spread of esoteric mysteries whose idea was to bring about a magical at-onement between sinful worshippers and the already ethically conceived god. In every case verse was the form employed for spell and ethical communication alike.

It is interesting to note that Gotama, Zarathustra, the great Hebrew prophets, Greek dramatists, all stem from the self-same root, namely, the by then germinating idea of divinity as Final Cause or Absolute Purpose above and beyond the world, not to be acted upon by magic, but solely by right conduct, goodness. The communications of these great poets still were cast in the traditional verse form, but now the significance of the form as magic spell began to be played down. It came to be conceived as embellishment instead, and so it remains to this day. No longer is the verse form functional.

But the recital of magic spell, if believed in; or intercession with divinity, if believed in; or message adequate



to stimulate belief and consequent command upon futurity through right action: these remain poetry whether cast in verse or not. Any communication becomes poetry as it brings its communicants into a better active relation with life. Yet as communication the condition remains that it first inspire belief, spontaneous action on this belief. Thus an official command is scarcely poetry—although the process by which recognition was achieved for the commanding officer's authority possibly was so, but still not communicated poetry. Didactic is never poetry. Communicated poetry is that which in and of itself inspires both belief and action. In connection with which we are reminded of the old saw, "seeing is believing." And this brings us back finally to the drama.

### *The Drama as Human Institution*

Any action or series of actions observed and recognized by the observer as meaningful to himself, is drama. The careless gesture of a nabob toward the entrance to an eating place should prove thrilling drama to the hungry beggar. The gesture is communication. However, the term drama is generally held to refer to a wholesale communication, not extended merely to one, nor to one at a time, but to many at once. It is conceived, not as spontaneous action, but as the imitation of such action or series of actions, performed by living actors before an audience. It belongs doubly to representation.

Drama has its beginnings far down the scale of life in the emergence of a representation process in life together with the social function of this, communication. The drama as distinctly human institution had its beginning as magico-religious rite conceived to secure special blessings upon the future. Initially it was practiced at once as offering to and obligation upon the offices of a slain hero, perhaps an enemy

in life, one whose spirit was conceived as potent on futurity. This eliminated the craven, the immature, the deformed and weak; one needs must be valorous and strong, active, to wield power on the future. There would be the purification of his body by means of the ever mysterious fire as prelude to a communal participation in the eating of the substance of his flesh, so to establish a mystical identity with him, claim upon his spirit. The institution of totemism should have arisen out of this same dramatic rite as a primitive zoo-animism colored the identification of significant victim, one with powers upon the community's future, perhaps as element in its normal food supply. Probably men possessed some sense of the idea of kinship ere this, surely some feeling of communal relationship, but the idea should have been the more concretely objectified for subsequent rationalization as all the participants in such a rite conceived themselves as one with the sacrificial victim or victims. Endogamy as an idea would naturally follow from this kinship idea, and so too its antithesis, exogamy. The warrior peoples whose women durst not be permitted participation in the eating of the slain warrior's flesh would acquire exogamy, the more peaceful hunters and snarers and fisher folk, endogamy. Nevertheless, before either idea could become fastened upon custom the basic idea of kinship would need to be recognized. But all this is unsupported hypothesis as well as digression.

The identification of protagonist, the sacrificial victim, went through numerous evolutions, no doubt. Like every other of man's institutions, the drama evolved slowly through cyclical series of changes, each change reflecting some change in men's mental grasp upon the concept of futurity. The repercussions of causality, world wide, served in time almost to stamp it out. It lost most of its subjective magical character, every active member of the community a necessary participant in the rite for the common good, to take on instead a

more objective and relative leading. The imitative aspect of playacting took stronger hold, and this was enough to keep the drama alive, for man by nature delights in imitation. And so what began as sacrificial rite developed into play, and comedy was born. Insofar as it still conservatively maintained itself as ritual, comedy came to be regarded as a magical fertility rite. Its season became occasion for a degree of sexual license not countenanced by the community at any other time. The Old Testament makes reference to just such a rite among the Hebrews: an annual spring dance of the maidens of Shiloh. Greek tragedy presents us with a fresh flowering, a cyclical recurrence of the tragic idea, by now much debilitated due to causal determinism, under the impact of the then novel idea of an ethical Final Cause, with even the godhead subject to this. But it needs be pointed out that Greek comedy developed much earlier than Greek tragedy.

### *Greek Tragedy*

Greek tragedy in its beginnings followed not-entirely-forgotten traditional patterns, naturally. The rite was performed at the tomb of this or that noble kinsman, at once as offering to and reciprocal obligation on his still to-be-hoped-for potent spirit. But under the dispensation of ethical Final Cause, it came to be conceived, in the lessons which the circumstances of his life should afford his present devotees. Through a surrogate was enacted this or that traditional action of his while on earth, generally an action associated with a communally beneficent purpose; his human shortcomings likewise exposed to explain the known balancing of ill fortune with good attendant on his life. Out of this with its inevitable tragic culmination was derived a message looking to better regulation of all men's actions, in this way a more

assured and happy future. Here was a return to prophecy, but now ethical communication instead of magical coercion or else divination.

### *Subsequent Evolution*

Not the least significant aspect of the drama's development has been the evolution of its audience. Originally there was no audience, as such, but every member of the community in good standing participated in the dramatic magico-religious ceremony. In this was utmost subjectivity in action toward an end, purest poetry. Here was communion rather than communication. To this day the Catholic Church preserves something of this in its Mass. But as the drama developed a more objective character it grew vicarious, representative—so too the ritual of the Mass. The members of the community delegated their duties to a chorus with one chief leader: the institution was by way of becoming professionalized. The Greek dramatists conceived a second actor, and soon a third, more adequately to represent the action of the drama, communicate its parable: already the members of the community were by way of turning into an audience. But still a homogeneous audience gathered to assist at, validate if no longer take active part in, the magico-religious ceremony. . . . Unfailing are the processes of time: the subjective yields to the objective, and this in turn to the relative; ethic merges into esthetic, soon esthetic into logic. The chorus, once the entire community, having lost its subjective character, lingered on for a space as esthetic form, a convention, but this too passed away. Its incidental function as ethical commentator on the action going forward became superfluous too once the dramatist learned how to develop his action prophetically to point its own moral. The drama had evolved into communication with little idea of communion remaining. Installa-



tion of a proscenium arch to frame the drama and a curtain to punctuate it meaningfully, both serving to further separate the action from the audience, finally rendered this evolution complete. Instead of a community gathered to participate in a subjective rite, or a community gathered to validate the objective performance of a rite, we now have an audience met to become party to a communication.

### *Theater Today*

But still it is met to become such a party, and this is its purpose in gathering. It comes prepared to contribute to the communication as necessary communicants. It is eager to respond to whatever message is to be conveyed, to laugh, to sigh, to weep, to find interest or a mere release from boredom. Unfortunately, drama designed to cater merely to the last named audience reaction is what our commercial theater most traffics in, plays of escape. This notwithstanding that salvation is what men, today as always, hunger after.

### *Categories of Drama*

We have had occasion to refer to tragedy and to comedy, and also to plays of escape: the drama comprehends many categories, drama persisting as the generic term for all. But more narrowly, drama signifies a presentation appealing to the senses, particularly to the eye and ear—a “show”—and through these to the emotions. Comedy refers to a representation, a reasoned argument cast into active form, appealing to reasonable judgment. Tragedy applies to an action and its final appeal is to the critical judgment. Yet any play, no matter what its category, must somewhat observe all these conditions: it needs to be framed in action as of the now; it will represent more or less reasonable men and women, or beings

that behave like men and women, in reasonable action; it presents all this to the eyes and ears of its audience. Presentation remains inescapable in any case, and hence the generic term. Specifically then a tragedy becomes the presentation of an action; comedy the presentation of a representation; drama, in the narrow sense, remains a mere presentation, a "show," and such applies to melodrama, spectacle and farce.

It may be well to point out right here that any event is indifferently comic or tragic or dramatic, and only one or another of these in accordance with the nature of the rhythm within whose series it is considered. Thus when as a young husband I first held child of my own in my arms I sensed the moment as a culmination, a novel and disturbing sensation, and a bewildering crisis, all at the same time. As a crisis it was of the nature of comedy—a newly initiated, dizzy father, I cut a comical figure in the eyes of that nurse, no doubt; and this same crisis of inexperienced young-fatherhood is employed often on the stage, and regularly with laughter-provoking effect. As a moment of sensation the moment was dramatic, a salient moment of my life, to be treasured in memory and brought out for occasional private show in that emotional panorama which I identify fondly as my dear life. But as a culmination in the tide of my blood strain the same event was tragic, the moment filled with an awful dignity, mystery, meaning beyond meaning. And so in a play the same as in life, all in flux, the character of each event is fixed by the nature of the rhythm pattern within whose frame it is contemplated.

It needs be further understood that in any play, no matter what its category, there will be something of the tragic, and something of the comic, and much of the dramatic too—else there should be no play. The three rhythm patterns merge one into another in any play just as they do in life—in time. While one or another of these rhythms will dominate any par-

ticular play, thus controlling the final character of the play as a unit whole, the contributory series are bound to manifest themselves again and again in the course of that play. And so the play takes on all the dimensions of life. The comic scene or bit is not interpolated into tragedy for the sake of relief, as say many of our critics more alive to artfulness than to art, but it grows there, it develops just where it does—it belongs. A play is an organic unity or it is nothing.

Tragedy, presentation of a unit action, naturally employs the series of action for its backbone structural rhythm. Drama, more simply a unit presentation or show, follows the series of presentation; comedy that of representation. An evening-length play of whatever category, in imitation of life, develops a magnitude of four time dimensions—five in the case of valid tragedy, critical judgment contributing the further extension of meaning, of universal truth.

To clarify as far as possible: a tragedy starts with expression of a subconscious idea or sentiment in its very first scene, developing the statement of this through a succession of minor episodes into clearness: these episodes in turn build up into nine sequent presentations; which merge in their turn to emerge as three expanding judgments, the idea growing increasingly conscious, compelling; until finally it becomes completely realized in action. The idea renders the tragic theme.

Comedy begins with presentation of a problematical idea, developing its attack on this rationally through a succession of minor judgments, conscious alternatives, genuine complications; which in turn develop actively into nine episodes, variations upon the idea as tested in action; and these again yield us three major presentations; which merge finally into one unified general judgment, the idea thus explored with reasonable completeness, its general truth or falsity demonstrated. Comedy develops a thesis rather than a theme, or

had we better say that its theme expands into an arguable thesis.

Drama has its beginnings in swift episode, arresting scenes, developing these in series into minor presentations of a dominant sentiment, the theme; these presentations merge in turn in series to yield nine judgments; which again merge to emerge as three more or less connected actions; so that what finally is unfolded is a unit presentation or show. Idea development is nowise pertinent to drama, wherefore the theme, whether beautiful popular sentiment, anomalous situation or "super-duper" personality, must remain constant through whatever changes, static, incapable of development.

The development of the critical judgment rhythm within the several categories of the drama demonstrates the distinctions between them most explicitly. Drama (meaning the common sense of the term, the "show" drama) starts off on the note of a universal popular judgment, a sentiment, embroidering on this through series after series (see chart page 110) to a final particular judgment, a strictly common sense popular judgment. Drama is little concerned with the process of rational judgment but caters throughout to accepted popular judgments, sentiments; what it sets out to produce is emotion. Comedy's initial and final judgments are both general judgments (see chart page 112) a score or more of complicative judgments developed between, all of which get tested in action to be proven absurd. The method is that of trial and error, the final judgment arrived at the one that can be best said to stand the test. Tragedy for its part starts off with a particular judgment, a subconscious one, in its conditions precedent; develops this rationally into a general judgment, the cause; finally to universalize in action (see chart page 114). Tragedy alone renders a critical revealing judgment wherein all lesser considerations are purged away, the katharsis noted by Aristotle.



We have remarked that the theme of tragedy is developed to universality, but yet a further note or two is in order. The tragic theme is a matter little understood. It has been commonly held that the theme of Hamlet is indecision, of Macbeth ambition, of Oedipus the King, incest: such judgments demonstrate a complete misreading of these plays. Incest can only be particular, indecision general, ambition alone of these might possibly be considered universal: how should these three find themselves classified under the same category? The theme of tragedy is ever to be discovered as a desire, in its initial statement an as yet undirected general desire of the protagonist. Thus the true theme of Macbeth is seen to be peace while it is the obstacle that is ambition. The theme of Hamlet becomes honor, vengeance providing the obstacle—indecision enters in simply as the almost equally balanced conflict between these two forces. The theme of Oedipus is to be read as atonement, sin the obstacle—the particular obstacle when it is disclosed the most appalling sin that the Hellenes might at all conceive of, incest. In every case, although only after agony, the theme triumphs.

An additional word is to be said regarding the obstacle of tragedy. In its earliest statement it is universal; subsequently particularized, represented as of a particular person; in the end it becomes generalized. One little understands the tragedy of Macbeth until he recalls that Banquo was a party to the meeting with the witches on the heath; that it was foretold of him that his seed should sit on the throne of Scotland; and that Macbeth was aware of this. He comes to see in Banquo, more particularly later in Banquo's ghost, the obstacle externalized—not as obstacle to his own ambition, that hardly makes sense since already he was firmly seated on the throne—but to his peace and to the peace of Scotland. To Macbeth's mind it was Banquo now who represented ambition, and he hated this, loathed it as the worst element

within himself, feared it too; and so he sought to destroy it before it should destroy all that he held dear. Only when so understood can Macbeth arouse our sympathies. Only so does the play become a tragedy, more than a sordid tale of bloody murders. . . . The obstacle of tragedy is of the selfsame nature as the theme of drama, but genuinely an adverse sentiment or mood. A tragedy is possessed of both theme and mood, the mood static, the theme dynamic. It is in the opposition of these two, both subjective to the protagonist but yet somehow externalized, rendered objective in action, that the elements of tragedy are to be found.

It should be noted that in the three instances cited, and in every case of valid tragedy, the hero falls victim to his mood, but yet the theme, his desire initially, later his intent purpose, stands vindicated in the end. Such is the universal final judgment of tragedy, the katharsis, wherein every tension is purged away, at-onement is achieved.

The canon of the drama is to show. So far as anywise possible everything needs be externalized, shown. Desires and obstacles are symbolized, rendered obvious in the persons of human characters. Particularly is this true of the show drama as distinguished from comedy or tragedy. The old Moralities carried the idea to its extreme, even to the affixing of definitive names to its symbolic characters. The later Comedy of Humours conceived its characters in scarcely less literal terms. By differentiating motives and ascribing this motive to that character, that to this, motives which in truth all men share alike, the inner conflict engendered by conflicting motives is externalized and the parable that every seriously conceived play aims to be is made clear for communication. Tragedy by its nature can not be made so obvious as drama, nor even as comedy—it is less dramatic than comedy, much less so than a drama. Instead, it depends more upon emotional perception in its audience, sympathy, in-

tuition. Nevertheless the fundamental principle of externalization, of show, applies to tragedy too, and only in less degree.

The most flexible medium for show is no longer the stage but the screen. Close-ups, angle-shots, flash-backs, a wider and deeper stage, more solid scene and change of scene, the advantages of swift cutting, all make possible the marshaling of story completely in terms of show. What the screen is forced to do without, namely, the direct rapport between actor and audience that the stage affords, is a loss only so far as subjective drama is concerned, tragedy. It is small sacrifice as regards objective drama and more than made up for by the greater possibilities for show. The cinema is a better medium for drama than the stage, although like to remain forever unsatisfactory as regards tragedy and intimate comedy.

Of all forms of communicated poetry the drama has long been recognized as the aptest form. It is framed characteristically as of the now in action's moving semblance to go beyond representation to a seeming first-hand presentation—to re-presentation at the least. It communicates its ethical message sensuously as well as by means of parable, and so without recourse to didactics. It impresses into its service all other fine art forms, along with living actors to lend it every dimension of life. The drama is able to re-present life working out its own future from the conditions and the causes that it discovers within itself. Above all other modes of human expression it remains prophetic. When sincerely conceived it is truest poetry.

We have now demonstrated in a general way how the rhythms we discovered inherent in time, the processes of reality, apply to man's evolutionary history, his intimate psychology, his arts, his poetry. These rhythms as they merge one into another provide us with a very blueprint of the

evolutionary process. To grasp them is better to understand the world, to get the solid feel of dynamic life, to know ourselves. But while a brief general demonstration was all our purpose here, I can not rest content until we have more fully exposed our principles in respect to dramatic timing. Correct timing is widely recognized as everything in drama. A sound textbook of dramatic timing is needed—there just isn't any. Such a work should have proved invaluable to me as a young man, saved me many, many years, agony, numberless disappointments. Such a work ought to prove of inestimable value to the world. Because the best hope of the world, today as always—more perhaps today than ever before—rests in prophecy. Today when prophecy, poetry, religion (the three are one) obviously are sunk to a new low.

Hitherto the principles of correct dramatic timing have been hidden, a mystery, dimly sensed by the few self-initiated through long years of anxious labors and close study of others' practices, clearly understood by none. We are able now to make them explicit to eager young minds. So that the world durst expect soon a renaissance of the drama, a rebirth of poetry. Then at last man's recurrent political, social and economic problems may be rationally attacked without recourse to war. Primitive drama did service cross-weaving feudal clans into close communities; a revitalized drama well might serve to knit all mankind together in one world community. By stressing the essential likenesses of men—differences are to be laughed at, anyway, certainly not fought over, as comedy well can teach us. By demonstrating in action the advantages to accrue from world order, no less the emotional satisfaction that amity affords. By civilizing, culturizing, instructing men in the one way that man seems able to learn. For we are so constituted as to learn best from doing, and/or only to a lesser degree by watching with sympathetic interest while the thing is done. Every new idea



has to prove itself in action; until it can do so it remains mere disruptive opinion, of negative worth. But the arena for such action need not necessarily be the battlefield, it can just as well be the stage.

Properly conceived, the stage offers a laboratory for weighing in terms of action and testing publicly every controversial idea, every social and ethical problem. Only, first we need to school the young playwrights to fashion great and greater plays.

STRUCTURAL PLAN  
and  
RHYTHM PATTERN  
of  
DRAMA

SCENE	PRESENTATION	COMPLICATION	ACT		
Occasion + Sensation ○ Composition —	Suspension —	Tension ○	Occasion +		
Tension ○ Presentation — Desire +	Attitude +				
Suspension — Attitude + Obstacle ○	Obstacle ○				
Tension ○ Presentation — Desire +	Occasion +	Presentation —		Occasion +	
Suspension — Attitude + Obstacle ○	Sensation ○				
Occasion + Sensation ○ Composition —	Composition —				
Suspension — Attitude + Obstacle ○	Tension ○	Desire +			Tension ○
Occasion + Sensation ○ Composition —	Presentation —				
Tension ○ Presentation — Desire +	Desire +				
Tension ○ Presentation — Desire +	Occasion +	Suspension —	Tension ○		
Suspension — Attitude + Obstacle ○	Sensation ○				
Occasion + Sensation ○ Composition —	Composition —				
Suspension — Attitude + Obstacle ○	Tension ○	Attitude +		Tension ○	
Occasion + Sensation ○ Composition —	Presentation —				
Tension ○ Presentation — Desire +	Desire +				
Occasion + Sensation ○ Composition —	Suspension —	Obstacle ○			Tension ○
Tension ○ Presentation — Desire +	Attitude +				
Suspension — Attitude + Obstacle ○	Obstacle ○				

A DRAMA consists normally of eighty-one scenes, each a brief episode, which build up in rhythm into 27 fleeting presentations—or better say moods, inasmuch as developed flat, two-dimensioned and no more. These 27 minor moods merge into 9 series of judgment complications, which merge in turn to produce three successive acts or actions in series of presentation rhythm, to organize a unit major unit presentation or “show,” be it Melodrama, Spectacle or Farce.

SCENE	PRESENTATION	COMPLICATION	ACT
Suspension — Attitude + Obstacle ○	Tension ○	Occasion +	Suspension —
Occasion + Sensation ○ Composition —	Presentation —		
Tension ○ Presentation — Desire +	Desire +		
Occasion + Sensation ○ Composition —	Suspension —	Sensation ○	
Tension ○ Presentation — Desire +	Attitude +		
Suspension — Attitude + Obstacle ○	Obstacle ○		
Tension ○ Presentation — Desire +	Occasion +	Composition —	
Suspension — Attitude + Obstacle ○	Sensation ○		
Occasion + Sensation ○ Composition —	Composition —		

*Key to Symbols*

- { Objective  
Presentative  
Particular
- + { Relative  
Representative  
General
- { Subjective  
Active  
Universal

STRUCTURAL PLAN  
and  
RHYTHM PATTERN  
of  
COMEDY

SCENE	COMPLICATION	EPISODE	
Tension ○ Presentation — Desire +	Occasion +	Suspension —	Crisis ○
Suspension — Attitude + Obstacle ○	Sensation ○		
Occasion + Sensation ○ Composition —	Composition —		
Suspension — Attitude + Obstacle ○	Tension ○	Attitude +	
Occasion + Sensation ○ Composition —	Presentation —		
Tension ○ Presentation — Desire +	Desire +		
Occasion + Sensation ○ Composition —	Suspension —	Obstacle ○	
Tension ○ Presentation — Desire +	Attitude +		
Suspension — Attitude + Obstacle ○	Obstacle ○		
Suspension — Attitude + Obstacle ○	Tension ○	Occasion +	Exposition —
Occasion + Sensation ○ Composition —	Presentation —		
Tension ○ Presentation — Desire +	Desire +		
Occasion + Sensation ○ Composition —	Suspension —	Sensation ○	
Tension ○ Presentation — Desire +	Attitude +		
Suspension — Attitude + Obstacle ○	Obstacle ○		
Tension ○ Presentation — Desire +	Occasion +	Composition —	
Suspension — Attitude + Obstacle ○	Sensation ○		
Occasion + Sensation ○ Composition —	Composition —		



A COMEDY consists normally of eighty-one scenes, each a brief presentation, which build up in series to integrate 27 judgments or, better say, complications—none but the last of which, a general judgment arrived at through process of trial and error, is able to stand unimpeached. The 27 minor judgments merge successively to integrate nine minor actions, or rather episodes—comedy is quite without a major action. The 9 episodes in turn develop 3 presentations, which inform a series in judgment rhythm to merge and emerge as a comedy.

1

SCENE	COMPLICATION	EPISODE	Judgment +
Occasion + Sensation ○ Composition —	Suspension —	Tension ○	
Tension ○ Presentation — Desire +	Attitude +		
Suspension — Attitude + Obstacle ○	Obstacle ○		
Tension ○ Presentation — Desire +	Occasion +	Presentation —	
Suspension — Attitude + Obstacle ○	Sensation ○		
Occasion + Sensation ○ Composition —	Composition —		
Suspension — Attitude + Obstacle ○	Tension ○	Desire +	
Occasion + Sensation ○ Composition —	Presentation —		
Tension ○ Presentation — Desire +	Desire +		

Key to Symbols

Key

—

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Obejective  
Presentative  
Particular

—

{

Relative  
Representative  
General

+

{

Subjective  
Active  
Universal

○

STRUCTURAL PLAN  
and  
RHYTHM PATTERN  
of  
TRAGEDY

SCENE	EPISODE	PRESENTATION	
Suspension — Attitude + Obstacle ○	Tension ○	Occasion +	Conditions Precedent —
Occasion + Sensation ○ Composition —	Presentation —		
Tension ○ Presentation — Desire +	Desire +		
Occasion + Sensation ○ Composition —	Suspension —	Sensation ○	
Tension ○ Presentation — Desire +	Attitude +		
Suspension — Attitude + Obstacle ○	Obstacle ○		
Tension ○ Presentation — Desire +	Occasion +	Complication of Conditions —	
Suspension — Attitude + Obstacle ○	Sensation ○		
Occasion + Sensation ○ Composition —	Composition —		
Occasion + Sensation ○ Composition —	Suspension —	Tension ○	Cause +
Tension ○ Presentation — Desire +	Attitude +		
Suspension — Attitude + Obstacle ○	Obstacle ○		
Tension ○ Presentation — Desire +	Occasion +	Presentation —	
Suspension — Attitude + Obstacle ○	Sensation ○		
Occasion + Sensation ○ Composition —	Composition —		
Suspension — Attitude + Obstacle ○	Tension ○	Complication of Cause +	
Occasion + Sensation ○ Composition —	Presentation —		
Tension ○ Presentation — Desire +	Desire +		

A FULL-LENGTH TRAGEDY consists, in theory, of eighty-one scenes, a fair number of which, however, dare be elided to save production time if only their substance be narrated subsequently in good time to leave no unexplained lacunae. The scenes build up in rhythmic sequences into 27 brief episodes; which in turn merge in series into 9 presentations; these again into 3 progressive representations or judgments, out of which emerges a unit major action: the tragedy. The initial judgment of conditions precedent, a common sense judgment, particular, together with that of the cause, a general judgment, both inadequate, are to be seen rather as complications; the final judgment developed through action, thus ethical, critical, universal, provides the satisfying katharsis to complete the tragedy.

SCENE	EPISODE	PRESENTATION	Culmination ○
Tension ○ Presentation — Desire +	Occasion +	Suspension —	
Suspension — Attitude + Obstacle ○	Sensation ○		
Occasion + Sensation ○ Composition —	Composition —		
Suspension — Attitude + Obstacle ○	Tension ○	Attitude +	
Occasion + Sensation ○ Composition —	Presentation —		
Tension ○ Presentation — Desire +	Desire +		
Occasion + Sensation ○ Composition —	Suspension —	Obstacle, Critical Judgment or Katharsis ○	
Tension ○ Presentation — Desire +	Attitude +		
Suspension — Attitude + Obstacle ○	Obstacle ○		

Key to Symbols

- {

Objective  
Presentative  
Particular
- +

{

Relative  
Representative  
General
- {

Subjective,  
Active  
Universal





# Timing the Drama

A play is the imitation of an action, or series of actions, by living actors, before an audience.

There is nothing new about the above definition, it has been current for thousands of years. It is elementary. But at once it establishes the nature of the drama, cuts to the heart of the playwright's problem, as no accepted definition that I know of does for any other art form. A play written and printed and published is not yet a play, it still requires to be produced before an audience. Expressly, a play is an essay in wholesale communication.

Also our definition should make clear that the playwright is not alone in his enterprise but must depend upon an uncertain number of collaborators. He does not communicate directly to his audience but through the persons of living actors. The scene designer, the lighting director, the costume designer and property man, as well, all will be contributing their shares to that totality which is the communicated play. The playwright assumes the senior partnership in this collaboration to become directing general, as it were, conceiving the plan of the whole which the others are to carry out in detail. These others may and even must improvise on occasion to suit the needs of the occasion, its special mood, but the playwright is forced to commit himself

to his plan, the plan of the whole, far in advance. How important then that his plan be thoroughly sound!

The play as written remains the plan. Here is what is to be got over to the audience, together with instructions as to the manner for doing so. And yet one witty, long experienced playwright is quoted as declaring: "Plays are not written, they are rewritten." A confession this that rarely is the original plan quite sound. The well nigh universal disability of untried manuscripts—of many that are worked over and over and over again and painstakingly produced—is in the timing. A feeling for correct timing comes with long practice, but still remains only a feeling. It is not sure knowledge. Even the most experienced playwright has never been able to be certain in advance that all the manifold elements which go to make up his still untried play were organized in just the right sequence. We believe we can remedy this at last.

Timing remains a problem—of time. To grasp the principles of correct timing it is needed first to explore the nature of time. Which shall serve as our apology to the eager student of the drama for the heavy dose of metaphysic that we have asked him to swallow. Doubtless it was a formidable beginning. But having downed it, he is likely to find an easier time in the middle and the end.

### *General Categories*

It is essential to an intelligent discussion of anything that first there be a close agreement on terms. The terms drama, comedy, tragedy, are loosely used in current general criticism, and this we had better correct at the start. It is inexact to label every sad play a tragedy, every merry play a comedy, only the thrillers drama or else melodrama. A drama may be thrilling or merry or sad; when sad it becomes sadder than the saddest tragedy; when merry, merrier than the

merriest comedy. A merry drama is specifically a farce. But it is not the mood of a play that determines its genre, rather its form and content. And form determines content.

It is a vulgar mistake to identify tragedy with sadness. A tragedy is always serious, often painful, and yet a genuine tragedy is never sad. For its focus is away from the blood and sweat and grief of the present toward a future, toward ever-unvanquished hope; it consists in the presentation of an unfolding action. Drama, more strictly a presentation, focuses backward from the present to the past, to what has gone to make things what they are; it is generally sweet, nostalgic, but it can be bitter just as well. Comedy focuses upon idea, ever present, on the consistencies and inconsistencies of the idea; and so comedy is itself consistently digressive. It finds occasion for merriment even in pain, much occasion for pain in merriment. When bitter, comedy can be the bitterest mode of human expression: as such we specifically label it satire.

Comedy, tragedy and drama all must enter into every play. But not in equal measure. It is the form of the play that determines inevitably how much that play will contain of this element and of that. To put in more than belongs of any one element, or to introduce the element where it doesn't belong, is to destroy the natural rhythm of the play, its total effectiveness.

But we want to make unmistakably clear the significances inherent in our various terms, all the distinctions between them. Thus, a deed done may or may not be dramatic, but it is never tragic. The doing of it may or may not seem tragic, the while it is dramatic only as the sure consequences of it are already known. Like enough in the latter case it presents itself to us as tragic but its genuine character is that of presentation, drama, the deed being already objectively defined, its consequences known, so that it is done and past even while being done. It becomes ceremony. Any event whose

outstanding character is that of consequence of what has previously transpired, is drama, such as the formal surrender of a commanding general to his victorious adversary. Here in a single ceremony, a dramatic tableau, is summed up a complete past action. The action while it was going forward, its outcome still in doubt—the war as fought—was tragic and in no sense dramatic. We only read drama into it afterward, looking back, at which time it is action no longer.

A grandly tragic moment is likely to pass unnoticed, its grandeur waiting to be revealed at some future time; at the moment this grandeur remains grubby with blood and sweat, dim with doubt, the moral code—augmented by those twin stars of faith and hope—the single lamp to light the way forward into the dark unknown. So that for purposes of the stage tragedy needs be closely linked with drama lest its significance be lost. It has to be presented, the audience put in possession of some inkling as to consequences, thus to focus interest backward on what is going forward. The actors are not presumed to share in this foreknowledge, or at least there needs remain something of doubt, as when Julius Caesar, forewarned, willfully refuses to accept the portents of his death. It is to be observed that omens such as this heighten the drama to minimize the tragedy. On the other hand, it is also to be noted how out of this apposition of tragedy with drama, the event focused upon from two directions at the same time, the code in whose light alone the protagonist can act is made to seem to burn more brightly and a parable read into the event.

Timeless truth (so called) is the single lamp of comedy, to light up present, past and future alike, impartially. Ferreting out inconsistencies, revealing falsity, comedy reduces this to the eternally absurd.

A revelation of emotion—after the event which occasions the emotion, naturally—appeals to emotion and is dramatic.



Revelation of will and purpose—in course of action engendered by purpose—stimulates will and purpose and is tragic. The trial and error test of an idea in action exercises judgment and is comic.

Magnitude belongs to drama, a vast panoramic sweep. Intensity belongs to tragedy, a single brief action forward moving, driven along by will. An action of insignificant magnitude but high intensity is likely to prove itself comic, such as the agonized effort to keep from sneezing at a moment inopportune. Both drama and tragedy need to preserve a careful balance between intensity and magnitude, or comedy ever lying in wait will seize upon to render ridiculous the overweighted scene. The “hamming” of overambitious actors, which is to say, the heightening to an unwarranted pitch of intensity of the emotional content of a line, can transform a sober scene into riotous burlesque. Underacting is both safer and better than overacting, as likewise understatement by the writer.

Violence may or may not be dramatic, often it is comic, but never is it tragic. The Greeks recognized this and erected a convention under which no deed of violence might be presented upon their tragic stage. Shakespeare whose plays abound in violence as suited the tastes of a violent age, yet puts into the mouth of his truly most violent character of all something about “sound and fury, signifying nothing.” Shakespeare knew that violence does not signify, that it does not belong to tragedy which should be all significance. We may be sure that he would not have employed it if it had not been demanded of him. Its violence of action is not the glory of the Elizabethan stage, as often has been maintained, but rather its debility.

Comedy assumes to criticize. It evaluates value and makes out to revalue it. But truth is comedy’s genuine concern, not value nor the generation of values. And so it is not poetry.

Nevertheless there may and even must be some moments of poetry in every full-length comedy as the tragic action rhythm inherent in its structure, although here a minor rhythm, interrupts to assert itself. The function of comedy is to demonstrate the truth of value, even more the truth of beauty, while at the same time, a paradox, the inconsistency of beauty with value.

Drama is nowise critical. Its aim is to present the beauty of values, incidentally the beauty of truth. And yet it is so little concerned with truth that it doesn't hesitate to falsify if so it may in the least serve beauty, which in this case means dramatic effect. In pursuance of which it regularly employs "hokum," descends into cheap sentimentality.

Tragedy alone is genuinely critical. It demonstrates the value of values, the value of beauty, above all the value of truth. Thus it generates ever fresh values to establish itself as poetry. It is poetry, prophecy, in its own right and nowise dependent on verse patterns artfully fashioned into its dialogue to afford it such title. Indeed, verse is apt to subtract from rather than add to the poetic content of a play in that it overstresses beauty and form. These are mere adornments to poetry, social value—ethic—remaining the essence. Truth while not the prime condition that value is, is yet a more significant element than is beauty. Verse, however, serves rather to falsify dialogue. The drama is rhythmic in structure, its rhythms functional, whereas the rhythms of verse remain a superficiality. Verse is not needed, it can only disturb, it no longer belongs to tragedy. Shakespeare found this out for himself and went as far as he dared in his later plays to abandon verse. Ibsen discovered it too and, forsaking verse, gave us a genuine rebirth of poetic drama.

Tragedy is never sad but always serious, a transcript of life. It is compounded equally of pain and ecstasy. But drama may well be sad while at the same time sweet, nostalgic. The

concept of death as final curtain is not tragic, to the contrary it is strictly dramatic. Tragedy is unconcerned with curtains, with deeds done, altogether with the doing of them. In short, tragedy looks to life not death. Death must remain forever static, a tableau for drama, whereas tragedy is dynamically alive. Genuine tragedy concerns itself with actions whose consequences are not to be summed up in the mere death of the protagonists. And so it develops universality. It goes beyond the individual experience which to the best of our knowledge does end with death, to pronounce a critical judgment upon universal human experience. Every play will possess something of universality inasmuch as it must comprehend something of action, but only such a play as asserts its universality triumphantly permits of being labeled a tragedy. And such a play will be one whose dominant rhythm of structure is that of action.

Be it remarked that death to the protagonist, or even a holocaust of all the parties to the action, is not universal but particular: life goes on. Not death but life is universal, tragic.

Universality belongs to tragedy. Its characters are conceived as individuals, individually motivated, from which point they are developed in the direction of universality. All men are presented as striving alike toward that which each for himself must regard as the good. Thus the similarities of men and women are stressed, the differences between them reduced finally to inconsequential circumstance. So that each of us in the audience is led through sympathy for one so like himself to see his very self struggling against what we must regard as fate up there upon the stage. We enter personally into every tragedy.

A comedy is general. People generally think and do and say such and such under almost any circumstances, their motives being pretty much the same in every case, veiled self-interest persisting as the leading motive. Comedy conceives its char-

acters as general, neither strictly individual nor yet quite universal. It does not set out to develop character but remains satisfied to leave this as it finds it. Comedy considers humans relatively as less or more foolish, perhaps least foolish when most foolish, but everyone foolish, and possibly even the godlike audience. By reason of its very unconcern with development of particular character, comedy again and again scores particularly characteristic roles.

A drama is severely particular. Particular persons under particular circumstances have done thus and so. Different persons well might have acted differently under those circumstances, or even the same persons under different circumstances. But these persons have done just so, circumstances being what they were, so that in action they are identified. Here action fails to emanate from character but the characters issue out of fortuitous action. In short, drama starts with general character, types, to individualize as far as may be later. We meet and recognize the juvenile, the ingenue, the "heavy" father, widowed mother, spinster aunt, rich uncle, male confidant, female confidante, country bumpkin, city slicker, miserly banker, shyster lawyer—a wealth of types, whether of villain or of comic or accessory character, a poverty of but one type for virtuous hero and heroine on which to drape, like on a tailor's dummy, a vast number of machine-made parts. Of personality there is nothing, which affords the actor opportunity to supply his own. Personable actors revel in this, offering occasion as it does for the highly commercialized "star" system.

### *Theme*

But the chief distinction between comedy and tragedy and drama, other than in their differing forms of structure—and we are coming to that again before long—rests in the



differing nature of their respective themes. Behind any work of the fine arts, the communicative arts, there is always a theme. It may be that a particular idea, a particular story or a particular emotion, is to be conveyed, and this can be fairly accomplished by narration, although much better always through a presentation. Or it may be that a general idea is to be discussed, in which event will develop the form of statement of a problem to be solved. Or still again, the theme may be a universal one, wherefore categorical, imperative, dynamic. This last type is the special theme of prophecy, poetry; in the drama we denominate it the tragic theme. The first two types, in the order mentioned, are the dramatic and the comic theme.

The initial question that the experienced playwright asks himself when he sits down to begin a new play is, just what is he after communicating. Is it primarily a story? Then he considers well what is the special mood or emotion of that story, and he notes this down to adhere to throughout his labors. If his story be one of whimsy it will revolve about a fantastic situation in which his as yet only half-conceived characters find themselves, and out of which they must constantly struggle to extricate themselves. The idea of the anomalous situation may have come first and the story grow out of it, or it may be the other way around; it is all the same. Or the playwright may not yet have a story, merely a particular idea such as, for instance, a silk dress whose meaning in tears and toil and hopes and human life he desires to express. Edward Knoblock did this last superbly well in "My Lady's Dress"; his story patently an invention consequent on his theme. The simple story of Elmer Rice's "Street Scene" just as plainly was conceived to fit his earlier selected theme, controlling mood of the play. But whether the theme or the story is first to enter into the author's mind remains immaterial; once selected, the theme controls to become the

actual starting point for all subsequent labors of creation. If it be an historical or legendary character that is to serve as theme, an old story here merely to be retold, the playwright first considers what particular facet of that character's manifold personality (if so it has come down to us) most interests him, after which it is up to him to choose and string together such episodes out of the hero's tradition as, in his judgment, best shed light upon this angle of the personality. With the selection of theme timing begins.

Or the playwright may feel that he has something to say on a controversial subject, want to argue this rationally. Here his theme will be general; he is forced to particularize it, discuss this active consequence and that out of the possible social meanings of the idea. He is under necessity to develop first a logical sequence for presentation of his argument, organize a thesis, after which he can find or invent a story, a series of episodes, to represent and interpret his thesis. Almost never if ever does story come first in the genesis of comedy, but it has to be built up later to fit the logic of the thesis. With the organization of thesis, initial logical plan, timing begins.

Or the playwright may have a story that he is moved to interpret in terms of ultimate human value, or an idea to develop in terms the same, so that it will be a tragedy he is after projecting. Tragedy may start with theme or with story indifferently, with tragic character as well, although such essays as begin with character mostly end up with presentation of that character, drama, and fail to plumb deeply those universal human motives which lie behind all characters. Or should we say that where particular character is the point at interest initially, it is the distinctions between this character and the general which are likely to invite consideration, in other words, the particularized personality, rather than universal human character. No Lincoln offered

upon the stage has ever yet been a truly tragic figure, nor is likely to be; the public is too interested in encountering, the playwright in dramatizing, his enigmatic personality.

There is still a fourth angle from which the venture into tragedy may start, and this is the obstacle. Indeed, obstacle is the most likely point of departure for tragedy after story. Any conscious action, such as a tragedy is, owns direction. It is pointed not only toward a universal goal but quite as much away from a particular restriction. The moral goal of tragedy invites the soul of the protagonist; the obstacle appealing to his baser self pushes him in direction away from his goal. The idea of vengeance for his father's murder urges Hamlet to debase himself, shakes him in his will to consistent honor. There is no play in will to honor alone; we all have it, it is universal. There have been scores of plays whose theme is vengeance, only these were melodramas. Tragedy arises out of the conflict between universal moral theme and particular amoral obstacle. And the obstacle, particular, is apt to present itself first to the playwright's mind, whereupon he next must choose a theme to contrast with it, provide the conflict. With the joining of tragic theme and obstacle timing begins.

Timing begins with the order of unity selected. The play may mean a unit action, or may mean a unit themal presentation, or one argued representation. A comedy organized of nine episodes, the argued representation, can skip about through the millennia, as is the case of Bernard Shaw's "Back to Methuselah"; the time remains all one time. The time is one so long as the argument develops unity. A drama, a themal presentation organized of three actions, likewise may jump from period to period; it may even turn the clock backward, as does Elmer Rice's "On Trial" and other similar plays (although this last is scarcely to be recommended); the time of the play remains one so long as the presentation



develops one theme. Only in tragedy, a unit action, is it that timing needs consider the clock. For while a single action may be of vast scope, like a great war for instance, endure for years to cover many continents, a countless cast of actors, innumerable scenes, such an action does not lend itself to dramatic treatment, at any rate, not as a unit whole. It might very well be conceived as show drama, the broad general action broken down into a small number of particular actions so selected as to present a more or less adequate panorama of that war. Here would be sketchily outlined what had happened, little of the meanings to be read out of what happened. Or the event could be treated as comedy, nine representative episodes offered; only that this must inevitably entail consideration, not of the war in question, certainly not of the action of the great war, but instead of the idea behind this particular war, or perhaps behind war in general. Strictly as a unit of action the magnitude of such an event is entirely too extended for transference to the stage.

Aristotle noted that a tragic action must have magnitude; he failed to specify that this magnitude needs be of a certain order. It has top no less than bottom limits. Five dimensions of structure are the most that our theater can afford: the war we have been discussing should be, as a complete single action, almost limitlessly dimensioned.

The bottom limit of magnitude of action for any tragic stage play corresponds to a time equal in duration to the time required for presentation, or roughly, two hours—the stage clock durst not be timed to run more slowly than the sun. It may be timed faster, yet not very much faster; a span measured in days is the utmost that a single tragic action can comprehend if its magnitude is to remain within the limits of the stage.

Someone is sure to argue that the span of any of Shakespeare's tragedies was of many years duration. The sufficient



answer is that these are not genuinely tragedies, at best dramas merging into tragedy. The specific tragic emphasis was Shakespeare's personal contribution to the theater of his day when demand ran to violent drama, bloody show. We noted early in our analysis of time that the more an action is extended in duration the more objective it necessarily becomes; the more subjective it is, the more sharply do we find it directed forward toward a future while its durational extension shrinks. There is an inverse ratio between duration and tensivity. Below a certain degree of intensity an action no longer yields dramatic interest. Chekov demonstrated this to the point of ridicule in "The Sea Gull" with the offering of his youthful protagonist's jejune dramatic essay. A single action extending over months and years becomes too attenuated for purposes of the stage. Any satisfying play covering a span of many years will be found upon examination to be organized of three actions, perhaps developing closely out of each other, but yet distinct one from another, while all tied together by unity of theme. Such a play is not tragedy but drama. Shakespeare's dramas are tragic to the extent that he was able to instil universality into them, and this he found a way to do in spite of the form imposed upon him by the tradition of his day. Perhaps this is the surest mark of his genius.

But still it will be pointed out that in life, as lived, an event of sufficient moment to provide a suitable action for tragedy rarely if ever is compassed complete within the space of a few hours, or even a few days. And this is true enough. But then it happens that life, as lived, is almost infinitely dimensioned, the drama limited to five dimensions. Only five processes can be selected to represent this life, those five whose unfoldment should produce the action desired, all other processes ignored. The intimate and essential processes of ingestion, digestion, elimination and a host of others, are

outside the tragic playwright's economy. We all know that in life, as lived, an acute constipation could reasonably explain bad temper and many an ill-advised action; but the tragic dramatist durst not avail himself of this, although the comedian might. Tragic prescription calls for the tenser, swifter processes of life to develop its action, not interrupted and retarded as in life by the recurrent intrusion of scores of other concurrent processes. Accordingly the action of tragedy becomes super-swift, quicker than life. But to compress into a few hours what in life might take weeks is not to falsify life; to the contrary, it is to develop faithfully within the limits of five dimensions a selective interpretation of life. On the other hand, to observe life's time-table meticulously without being able to represent all the processes that enter into that time-table, is to leave unexplained lacunae, dispense with understanding, sacrifice truth to photographic fact.

There has been endless argument waged as to the warrant and scope of the unities, but when well considered there is just one all-embracing unity: unity of time. In the case of tragedy unity of time signifies unity of action, which in turn implies unity or identity of chief actor, one individual protagonist however universalized. Also implied is unity of place. This does not mean that the action of tragedy must all unfold within one narrowly constricted spot, one set scene—although for the playwright so to arrange where possible is good practice in that it serves to concentrate attention more narrowly on the action—but the various scenes durst be conceived to lie no farther apart in space than reasonable for the actors to negotiate easily within the time and the scheme of the action. In the case of the show drama unity of time signifies simply unity of theme. As regards comedy it means unity of argument, a logical thesis. And of course in any case, unity of structure for the dramatic essay as a whole.

These several unities are to be seen as but aspects of the one great central unity, that of time. Out of the organization of the respective unities develop all the niceties of dramatic timing. Again we repeat: with the selection of theme, timing begins.

### *The Scene*

The scene is the least component unit of any play, whether drama, comedy or tragedy. It does not admit of being further resolved. Individual speeches are not in themselves dramatic units, or if on occasion one turns out so to be, it is because it constitutes a unit scene all by itself. Just as well there need not be one word said to constitute a scene. Drama consists in an interplay of action between characters which speeches or pantomime, or more often speeches and "business" together, merely communicates. The least such dramatic unit is the scene.

A scene is commonly conceived to refer to that development of the action which occurs between an entrance or exit of a character or characters, and the next subsequent exit or entrance of the same characters, or others: any change at all in the personnel present on the stage. But such a definition is not entirely sound. Every change in relation of the characters present spells action; the least definite unit of such action signifies a scene whether or not there has been change in the mere numbers of persons holding forth. Thus there may develop two, three, or even more scenes between an entrance and an exit; more rarely two or three separate entrances and exits are required to fulfill the intent of a single scene. Technically this is not good practice, however; it is likely to confuse an audience. Entrances and exits offer themselves as readily recognizable punctuation points, their employment as such forwards effective communication of the

action. While not valid in every instance, there is good reason behind the convention which holds that each scene shall be marked off at its beginning, again at its end, by an entrance or an exit.

The scene then becomes the atomic unit of a play. It may have—must have—a structure of its own but its internal structure is without essential relation to the structure of the play. In respect to the play as a totality the scene is but a point, dimensionless. Only as scenes enter into series does the play take on dimension, a formal structure.

Each tragic scene comprehends a minor judgment emotionally arrived at, more or less supposedly subconscious so far as regards the actors concerned. A brief sequence of scenes, the first conditioning, the second causal, the third climactic, builds up into a more or less complete minor action or, more correctly, episode since of little magnitude. But yet it is to be noted that even the minor action of tragedy takes on dimension, motivation, structure. Such can not be said for the show drama. In this each scene is so conceived as to present an atomic episode in itself.

As a consequence, the swift minor action of show drama must depend for seeming motivation on the play's occasions, together with the expressed attitudes and desires of its characters. Wherefore the characters of show drama are necessarily presented as mere complexes of recognizable attitudes and desires, "humours." They fall into a number of easily recognized types: juvenile, ingenue, villain, heavy, comic, and so on. Also, since both characters and minor action are represented as motivated by occasions, attitudes, desires, understandable at a glance, it becomes possible to present drama with fair adequacy in pantomime if the construction has been thoroughly sound. This does not hold for comedy or tragedy. In drama the function of dialogue is little more than to heighten the tensions and suspensions growing out of their



occasions. Hence the emphasis placed upon the telling "line" which sums up a situation succinctly, as well as on the "gag" to cast light upon attitude, maybe on desire, from a fresh angle.

The briefest sequence of scenes in drama unfolds a minor presentation, and from this develops drama's distinctive character. Drama is meant to be looked at, listened to; its appeal is to the senses. It claims belief on the ground of being seen, beyond this its communication will little stand criticism. It remains a "show."

The comic scene is genuinely an atomic mood or presentation. A brief series of scenes, their sequence crisis, exposition, judgment—or better say, complication, since under the judgment process of trial and error most judgments prove erroneous only to complicate matters—builds up into a representative or general judgment. Thus comedy may be seen to further analyze the material of the tragic scene, each element providing substance for an entire comic scene. The minor action of comedy is richly motivated; on the other hand, no major action ever develops.

While we are forced to conceive of the scene as if a dimensionless atom within the structure of the play as a whole, this is not to say that it is itself without structure or dimensions. We discovered early that each least unit of time or of action is possessed of magnitude. The durational extent of scenes varies markedly, from a brief second or two on the stage to five, six minutes or longer. In general we find dramatic and comic scenes swifter than tragic scenes, although the deeply tragic scene is likely to prove briefest of all. And the very longest of scenes are comic scenes—maybe they fail to seem funny at the time—scenes of the reasoned representation of a problem. The comic scene is little measured by duration, rather by the pertinence of its collateral reference. Nor is the tragic scene measured by duration but

by forward-carrying tensivity. As in any play the rhythm shifts from action to presentation, to representation, and so back to action once more, the quality of its successive scenes will change while they slow down in tempo or quicken accordingly. But this last is only a general rule and something that even the novice senses as he works.

What about the internal structure of the scene? This also remains impossible narrowly to define. A dramatic scene differs from a comic or a tragic scene, a tragic from a comic scene perhaps more so, but yet there is no fixed principle involved. Scenes reveal any and every sort of pattern or structure, no two scenes in sequence quite the same. They are like snow crystals in this. Generally, however, the dramatic scene, a miniature episode, is to be found roughly patterned on the rhythm of action; the tragic scene, a miniature judgment, develops more or less in the pattern of judgment; the comic scene, an atomic mood, is built much after the pattern of presentation. Only there is nothing absolute about this; at any rate, there little seems to be. The playwright has to depend on his innate timing sense along with the circumstances of the occasion to construct the individual scene. But after all it is no great matter, the individual scene. It is the way that scenes build up into rhythmized sequences, rather, that gives impact to a play, produces its memorable moments.

### *The Act*

The clear reference of the term, act, is to an action. In tragedy the entire play is but one action so that in theory it ought to consist of no more than a single act. Practically, however, the attention of an audience will not stand the strain of a two to three hours-long communication of high emotional intensity without some intermission for rest. Discussion has

raged for centuries as to what for tragedy is the proper division into acts.

In the show drama there is no such problem. Any melodrama, spectacle or farce, is an integrated presentation of three actions; it divides naturally into three acts. There was no problem presented to the classic Greek theater. Greek tragedy was not five but only four-dimensioned, not the developed full-length play that we know today; but each classic tragedy remained more precisely a unit act out of the more complete although never completely integrated dramatic trilogy. The running time of a single Greek tragedy could not much, if at all, have exceeded an hour, in any case. Sophocles is credited with writing upwards of a hundred tragedies, an impossible production for one lifetime, quality considered, had he turned out what we today term full-length plays.

Attempt has been made by moderns, notably by Archer, to demonstrate that interpolation of the choral odes served the purpose in Greek tragedy of a division into acts, the best that could be had without a curtain; but this proves no more than a bright idea. Each Greek tragedy remained a unit act, three tragedies and one satyr play being given presentation on a day, with intermissions between and change of scenery in full view of the audience serving to relax attention. No curtain was needed. The choral interpolations are little to be understood if conceived of as intermission periods. Rather do these odes mark the development of critical judgment upon the action to culminate finally in the katharsis. Their incidence belongs to the critical judgment rhythm which so was made explicit, not left implicit as is our modern custom. Had there been any problem of act division then, one may be sure that the Greeks were quite capable of inventing the curtain or its practical equivalent.

Nor does comedy offer a problem in respect to division

into acts. A comedy divides naturally into three parts, called acts by custom but genuinely presentations. Comedy enjoys every license, however, so that the rule of three divisions need not be adhered to strictly; the greater number of comedies are indeed organized into three acts, yet it is quite permissible to divide into two or four or five acts, intermissions being introduced as convenient.

Only modern tragedy poses a problem in respect to act division, but this problem is very real. At first thought it might seem that act division here ought to follow on the series of the play like in the case of comedy and the show drama, a first act devoted to conditions precedent, a second to the cause, the third to culmination; but this does not work out satisfactorily at all. For each of these periods begins on a high note, crisis, to end up on an emotionally much less sustained note, judgment, so that any such division would give us anti-climactic "curtains."

To genuinely understand the problem it is needed first to understand the function of the curtain. The curtain is a fairly recent innovation along with the proscenium arch. The arch particularly, and the curtain incidentally, serve to separate stage from audience, set them apart, render more objective what transpires on the stage. Thus together they have worked to the advantage of the show drama at expense of comedy and tragedy, by emphasizing the objective, sensory and representative, as against the subjective and active or the relative and representative.

The particular function of the curtain is to punctuate the presentation. It marks off a meaningful major division of the play to much the same intent that an entrance or an exit marks off that least unit division, the scene. Quite apart from its immediate function of permitting overstrained attention to relax, the curtain is able to contribute something to a ready grasp of the direction and the meaning of the action.



Every play, tragedy no less than show drama, makes its appeal through the senses, wherefore drama is the one term that applies to all play forms. The sensory impression left with us as the curtain falls is one that is likely to persist. It is imperative then to leave a fruitful impression, one that carries forward. And this is why an anti-climactic curtain will not do.

Sometime in the seventeenth century it was discovered that tragedy might adapt itself to the curtain and the proscenium arch, and so to special shifting scenery, if an artificial act division were employed. Most active intervals of tragedy are those of the three crises, the first of conditions, the second of the cause, the third of culmination; and active in a rising crescendo. By employing these moments as far as possible to bring the curtain down a dramatically satisfying effect was had. There still remained a number of minor problems; such as that the crisis of conditions coming at the very outset of the play, the first act is rendered unduly short; the second act if it be continued on directly from conclusion of the first act to include the crisis of the cause, should be unduly long; likewise the third act taking in the crisis of the culmination; a fourth act developing final judgment should again be short. Also it was found that a fully developed tragedy, eighty-one scenes, owing to the dignified pace of tragedy, takes more time for presentation, what with scene shifting and intermissions, than is acceptable to an audience as a single performance.

The various problems were met and solved acceptably for the time by eliminating many scenes having to do with exposition, both of conditions precedent and of the cause, and by adopting the convention of five acts for tragedy. The first act presented the crisis and touched on the exposition of conditions. The second act completed an abridged exposition and developed the complication of conditions—it failed to

achieve a climax but did escape anti-climax. The third act rendered the crisis of the cause. The fourth presented an abbreviated exposition along with complication of the cause, continuing on to develop the crisis of the culmination. The fifth act rendered final judgment. Shakespeare was painfully adapted to this convention, many of his important exposition scenes cut or emasculated to render it workable. For more than two centuries the five-act convention persisted until almost it came to be conceived of as divinely ordered.

But sometime during the eighteen-hundreds it was discovered that by means of eliminating completely the crisis of conditions, as well as abbreviating the exposition, the curtain might be rung up on an action ready to rise. The content of the omitted scenes could be conveyed to the audience in retrospective narrative if the dialogue were done well, and at a vast economy of time. From a quiet opening in the middle of conditions precedent the action of the first act was continued right on through the crisis of the cause, providing a powerful curtain. Similarly much of the exposition of the cause was dispensed with, its substance narrated later as having transpired during the interval that the curtain was down, and so the crisis of the culmination was brought forward to close the second act. The third act rendered final judgment. In this way tragedy was provided with effective curtains, almost as telling as the climactic ones of the show drama. At the same time acting time was reduced to what the temper of a modern audience will stand for.

Unfortunately, Shakespeare's plays can not be treated in this fashion. The bard betrayed a sense of time remarkable in his generation, yet not unerring; Ibsen, Chekhov, Synge, Shaw at his best, have developed timing to a delicacy as nice as was that of Sophocles. But in one respect besides the music of his verse, Shakespeare stands supreme: no one ever has been able to create such stirring, memorable critical opening

scenes as he. The tradition of his openings has grown with the years, every audience demands their presentation. So that the curtain has to be rung up on the very beginning of any Shakespeare tragedy. This would be all to the good if it were not that audiences still rebel at the idea of a four-hour performance, even of Shakespeare, so that it remains necessary to cut subsequent scenes, scenes not so interesting in themselves perhaps, but vastly more important in the building of the action. And further, since the bard's verse durst be disturbed little if at all, it is never possible to interpolate later in the dialogue a narrative of the substance of the scenes left out. Shakespeare is made to suffer for his very virtues.

Today the act division of tragedy may be into three, four or five acts. Three-act division is generally held to offer distinct advantages. This involves an elision of twelve to twenty-four scenes out of the normal eighty-one, only fifty-seven to sixty-odd being presented. The omitted scenes require to be represented as transpiring while the curtain was down and reported on later. In this connection it must not be forgotten that the immediate function of every form of the drama is to show, wherefore extreme care needs be exercised by the playwright that no scene which the audience might reasonably expect to see be omitted.

### *Less Obvious While Most Significant Divisions of a Play*

We had occasion in our investigation into time's structure to refer to that parallel structure, language structure. We found that language, which is to say communication, employs the self-same structural elements as are peculiar to time: presentation and judgment and action. Simple language symbols, words referring to these elements, get joined together serially into units of more extended meaning, phrases, propositions and sentences, much as events in time merge to

emerge as vaster events. And sentences join together the same way in turn, and such units of wider meaning again, until any event of whatever magnitude admits of being faithfully represented.

Words remain the primary building blocks of language; the propositions and sentences into which they are cast become its secondary structural units. But the playwright works with a primary structural unit of a magnitude vastly greater than that employed in any other form of communication, namely, the scene. Unlike other literary craftsmen, he durst not much concern himself with literary but rather dramatic values. For all that, a great play ever proves itself the very best of fine literature. This because it will be alive with functional form, genuine style. The playwright who works intently for functional form in the whole is likely to conceive functional form in its minuter parts subconsciously; the literary craftsman laboring consciously for style in every line, may never achieve functional form in the whole. Be this as it may, the scene becomes the playwright's essential building block, and it is the way he puts scenes together rather than the literary quality of his individual scenes, which finally determines the audience appeal of the plays he produces.

Scenes observe the same laws as apply to words and sentence structure, the structure of all composition for communication. Every scene is at once presentative, representative and active, but yet all not equally so. Certain scenes will be relatively more active than others, some more presentative, others representative, reciprocal. A series of scenes, one out of each relative category, merges to form a new action whole of greatly extended significance. The series retains all the dimensions of its integral scenes while at the same time developing a new and added dimension of its own.



The meaning of the series as a new whole will prove a function not only of the meanings of the individual scenes but also, and much more, of the order of their sequence, whatever this may be. And in any orderly sequence it will be the function of the final of the series that most colors the meaning of the newly integrated whole, imparts its own particular character of presentation, of representation, or of action. This is the law of functional order; a law that *in parvo* may be somewhat trifled with by custom, as in this or that convention of a particular language usage, idiom, but is never obscured and operates in force to govern the emergence of all the larger units of communication in any language. It represents the law of organic structure.

A series whose order is presentation, representation, with action the final, develops as a vaster action unit—if still of minor magnitude we should term it an episode. A series whose sequence is representation, action, with presentation the final, develops as a vaster presentation unit—if still of minor magnitude we should call it a mood. A series whose sequence is action, presentation, with representation the final, develops as a representation, a judgment—a judgment of little magnitude, unconsidered, most often proves to be a complication. Such integrations form the intermediate divisions of any play.

A show drama whose basic scenes are essentially active, each a minor episode, develops its scenes in the serial order of presentation, so that each such series evolves as a mood, the primary synthesis and secondary unit for further synthesis. A series of moods, again, develops in serial order of representation to generate a judgment, the secondary synthesis and third unit. A series of judgments, once more, develops in serial order of action to produce an action or act, the third synthesis, fourth unit and major division of the

play. A series of acts develops finally in serial order of presentation, completing the cycle, to evolve as a unit presentation, the play complete.

The basic scene of comedy offers us essentially a minor presentation, a mood, and each series of scenes follows the serial order of representation to generate a minor judgment or complication; judgments succeed each other in series of action rhythm to develop episodes; which in turn arrange themselves in serial order of presentation to evolve a final series of major presentations; which final series follows the pattern of representation once more to produce a multi-dimensioned general judgment, the comedy complete.

In tragedy the scene offers essentially a representation, a minor judgment, so that each series of scenes builds up into an episode, each series of episodes into a presentation, each series of presentations into a judgment, and finally the series of judgments into the tragedy complete.

It will be noted that similar divisions obtain for all three categories of play form, but the magnitude of the similarly designated units varies from form to form, and so their order in the genesis of the projected play. In all cases we offer the scene as by custom the one term for the basic unit; a full-length play of whatever category consists properly of eighty-one scenes. The secondary unit of tragedy, however, is the episode; of show drama the presentation; of comedy the judgment; twenty-seven secondary units to a complete play. The third unit of comedy is the episode, of tragedy the presentation, of drama the judgment; nine such units to any full-length play. The major division of drama is the act, of comedy the presentation, of tragedy the judgment; three such major divisions to any play. And these are the divisions a playwright needs take into account in making a play, building scene upon scene to produce this division, and this division upon this to develop that division, and that again,

and so on once more, each progressive integration meaningful and contributing enhanced meaning to the meanings one is able by words alone to communicate, until the whole play is accomplished, a five-dimensioned unified time structure alive with meanings, imbued at every moment with presentation, with representation, and with action, alike.

We employ the term conditions precedent to denote the presentative judgment, initial interval in the action series; cause to denote the representative judgment, middle interval; and culmination or climax to denote the final interval in the same series, that of the critical judgment upon action. The selection of these terms as most clearly definitive has earlier been explained. Likewise the term crisis as initial interval, active or emotional presentation, in the judgment series; exposition, middle interval, sensible presentation; and judgment or complication, final interval in the same series, representative or rational presentation. And also employment of the terms occasion, tension, suspension, to denote the representative, active and presentative action intervals in the series of emotional presentation; attitude, sensation and presentation to denote similar intervals in the series of sensible presentation; desire, obstacle, composition, the same in the series of rational presentation. Indeed, we have found it advisable on our diagram charts of play structure (see pages 110 to 115) to employ the terms for the nine presentation intervals to suggest seminally both the active and presentative content of each and every unit interval in a play other than the three major intervals which render that type of play's main structural series. The why of this has been earlier explained.

It has been found inescapable to employ the two terms, presentation and judgment, each in two senses, a general and the particular sense. Thus the final episode integrating the sensible presentation series is labeled presentation, and most

definitively so, while yet the integrated series of which it is but a part, exposition, is classified as a presentation along with crisis and judgment or complication. In the same way, judgment is the term applied to the final presentation, a rational one, in the judgment process, the integrated series of presentations likewise a judgment although of greater magnitude. The difficulty arises from the inability of our common language terminology to accommodate itself adequately to the facts of evolution. We might label the particular presentation and particular judgment, presentation/1 and judgment/1, the general presentation and general judgment, presentation/2 and judgment /2. This would be scientifically accurate but hardly befits our common speech. Perhaps a later generation will invent a way to distinguish narrowly such shades of reference. Meanwhile we have to get along as best we can, constantly on guard; although in these particular instances, now that attention has been called to them, it is scarcely likely that anyone will be much befuddled

As a permanent guide to the holistic divisions of plays and the patterns of their organization into the whole, correct timing for each of the several categories of play form, one is referred at all times to the diagram charts of structure offered on pages 110 and 111, 112 and 113, 114 and 115.

### *Organization*

We are about ready now to start work on the scenario or organization of our play, the timing of its sequences. So we are brought up short in dismay to realize that it has not got any parts to put into sequence; we conceived it whole, an unresolved totality, in its theme and outline story. Never mind, this is the way it should be. The story we can somehow break down into its elements, parts, and we have been advised that reorganization of these parts into the sequences of our



play as a whole should then proceed as a function of the nature of our theme. But this sounds rather frightening too, so that the impatient among us are going to ask, why can't we just go ahead and tell our story, through the medium of action dialogue, in its natural sequence, and let it go at that? And certainly, that is the very way we want to do it. Only—what is “natural sequence”?

It ought to be clear from our study into the nature of time that events of a suitable magnitude to present are four-dimensioned or more. They extend into subconscious perception and correlate of this, presentation; into conscious representation or reason; into conscious action; and into something of critical judgment besides; these several processes unfolding each in a different direction and all at once. An event of magnitude lending itself to a full-length stage presentation is five-dimensioned. It unfolds five distinct lines of extension at every moment to develop a solid time structure. To communicate the feel of this solid structure is the essential problem of dramatic technique. Narrative will not do it, a single-dimensioned flow of contributory happening. In narrative the normal sequence of sub-events is direct, one happening following another in logical order. The playwright's story as first selected or conceived to fit his theme, is narrative. It requires to be organized anew for purposes of the stage in the pattern of multi-dimensioned life.

In life we plan a far flung enterprise—and then sit down to dinner. There is no direct connection between dinner and our enterprise, they belong to different processes. The one is a long-term process, the other a short, and the short-term process is bound to interrupt the long again and again before the other can bear fruit. We'll be sitting down to dinner meanwhile many times. And numerous other affairs are apt to intervene as well, so that the course of events in life, as lived, is to be seen as a curved line, indirect. Each process

rhythmically interrupts every other, and with each interruption—for the space of that process's interval—a fresh turn is given to events. So with the drama.

In narrative we select from contributory happening to relate only what we consider pertinent to the main event. In the drama there is no such latitude. We do choose what processes will develop the structure we want to give such and such a main event, our story as a whole, but we must then set down faithfully every contributory event that these processes unfold. Only so are we able to reconstruct in the semblance of life. And we need to set our sub-events down in the precise sequence dictated by the rhythms of the several processes selected as they work in and through and interrupt each other. An incorrect sequence can wreck a play.

Correct dramatic sequence is inevitably an indirect sequence. Looking at any event through the frame of reference of progressive action, as we as humans are constrained to view it, its four-square structure looms up in perspective as a progressive sequence pattern, yet a pattern of indirect sequences. We reconstruct the event, or construct its semblance, as we follow its indirect sequence pattern faithfully.

There are three general categories of event, and three broad categories of play form to correspond. An event may be generally presentative, its character of presentation developed necessarily through representation and action, which establishes the pattern of its indirection. Such an event is dramatic. Or it may be generally representative, developed through action and presentation, which event we recognize as comic. Or it may be active and tragic, developed through presentation and representation. The character of any event to us is a function of its indirection pattern.

Pattern is the medium through which chaos yields to unity. It manifests itself as a rhythm series, or series of series, the manner of orderly organization of complex detail.

It reveals itself to the beholder of a work of art as that work of art develops: pattern builds up. But in the genesis of a work of art a reverse order is entailed. There must come first of all the breaking down of a preconceived simple totality—in the case of a play its theme and outline story—into essential pattern, essential complexity, for subsequent filling in with dialogue and “business.” Organization of a play begins with an analysis.

The theme controls. What is the nature of the theme: is it simple and particular, in other words, dramatic? Then we need to look for and distinguish three separate action movements in our story. Or if we haven’t as yet got a story we will contrive one of three movements. Or if we already have, say, two action movements, we shall need to invent a third. These movements want to be marshalled in a particular order; the introductory movement first, as for instance, “boy meets girl”; the climactic movement second, “boy loses girl”; and finally the denouement. The introductory movement, general, offers occasion—although under a certain mood it might be more definitely labeled the attitude, or perhaps under a light mood, the desire. The second movement, universal in leading, climactic, describes itself best as the tension or, perhaps, the sensation, or maybe the obstacle. The denouement, particular, will be equally a suspension, a presentation and a composition.

Setting down our story so, in its broadest outlines but correctly marshalled, our play’s organization is soundly under way. We have achieved for it two dimensions already: theme and basic story.

Next, the three action movements require to be broken down in turn into their respective elements: the conditions precedent, the cause, and the culmination of each; and so we begin to conceive our play in terms of three dimensions. Probably no few elements of this three-dimensioned struc-

ture will have come to us already with our first appropriation of story, but we shall find it wise to consider and reconsider these most carefully along with such other sub-events as our analysis now prompts us to add, since nothing will contribute more importantly to our play than a sharp development of inevitable action.

After we have our play complete, extended complete into three dimensions—and it will be remarked that we are at pains to keep our play complete at every step, its unity unassailable—we durst begin to organize it four-dimensionally. The conditions, the cause, and the culmination or climax of each of the three successive action movements, require to be broken down in turn into their elements. Each such condition, each cause and climax, stands as a rational judgment, a complication, three successive complications informing an action; and every complication is reducible to three sequent presentative moods: occasion or else tension or else suspension, and attitude or else sensation or presentation, and desire or obstacle or composition, so finally to emerge into judgment. At this point we are conceiving the motives of our characters, the characters themselves, and we may proceed to list these now, give them names. In addition to the central characters, actors demanded by circumstances of our action movements, we discover that we need one, two, three or more, supplementary characters to cast into relief and explain these chief actors, their motives. But the supplementary characters, it will be noted, we can nowise motivate in turn; they will have to be painted in flat, either in strong colors to afford relief, traditional method for limning villain or comic, or in pastel tints to blend into the background, equally a traditional method for dealing with invalid mothers, male or female confidants, servants, etcetera. All our characters will needs be summed up more or less completely in their attitudes and desires, the central characters less completely so since



we do remain able to define them somewhat further through their actions. But we have arrived at the moment when we had better devote close attention to our characters, their attitudes and desires, consider these impersonally and in strict relation to our theme. They want to revolve about the theme, so to center attention upon it. No attitude not pertinent to the theme belongs to the play; artistic economy forbids the introduction of any character superfluous because extraneous. Or even superfluous because the attitude he or she expresses is sufficiently represented already. The late Sidney Howard's sincere and brave essay, "Yellow Jack" was vitiated in audience appeal by reason of a boring redundancy in this respect. Many an otherwise well-conceived war play has been ruined by overstressing in character after character the attitude of manful courage or else poltroonery. Laurence Stallings' and Maxwell Anderson's collaboration, "What Price Glory?", reveals itself as well nigh classic in respect to its sharp individualization of attitudes all revolved about the central theme.

So now the story of our play has been projected into four dimensions, peopled with a cast of necessary characters, the actions broken down into judgments, the judgments again into moods. The motives for action for our play as a whole have thus been analyzed, the inner motives of our actors suggested. While in the type of play that we are planning, a melodrama, spectacle or farce, we may not hope to plumb deeply into inner motive, character, we may and must do more than merely suggest the characters of our chief actors; our obligation is to demonstrate these in action. So we set about analyzing our successive moods into series of revealing episodes. What has gone before has been inventive, partaking equally of analysis and synthesis, but from this point on our exercise becomes particularly creative. Certain of our needed episodes we already have, of course, as significant

scenes within our basic story, but others, perhaps most, we shall need to manufacture to fit. Also we must organize these episodes into a revealing scenic sequence pattern.

First will come an occasion, the occasion of the crisis of conditions of the opening action movement, which also happens to be an occasion although on a cyclically vaster scale. Here the audience will be introduced to the barest circumstances of our play, what in general it is to be about. Next follows a brief tension, which since actively presentative, we label rather a sensation; and third, a swift suspension, or since it is bound to be more or less a common sense rationalization, we call more accurately a composition; and so the scenario of our play is off to a good suspenseful start. For we have arranged to introduce many of our characters, along with the circumstances of our play, in action, with a throbbing rise and fall, swiftly and interestingly—dramatically.

A fourth scene will present emotionally, hence tensely—the scene is in fact a tension—something of the conflicting attitudes of the personnel of our play, which the fifth scene will explore more quietly, circumstantially, to establish clearly. A sixth scene must be given over to a revelation of the deepest heartfelt desires of hero and/or heroine, thus to sum up his, her or their inner attitudes. And next a series of scenes 7, 8, 9, the obstacle, in which the initial action gets joined, swiftly starts to rise.

And so on. Follow the sequence pattern offered in the diagram chart for drama on pages 110 and 111, and your scenario will build up timed just right. Eighty-one swift episodic scenes to be selected or invented, and arranged in proper sequence—timed—so to organize your play.

A similar procedure is in order in the organization of a tragedy, except that, having but one action to analyze into its elements, we have time to extend our analysis deeper into character and its motives. The episodic movement is thus

less swift. And a similar procedure again in the case of comedy; only that here, plumbing still another dimension deeper into and behind motives, a major action gets no chance at all to develop.

The critical judgment rhythm, interpenetrating all other processes, is responsible for organic development of theme. Its pattern provides a check on any tentative scenario to see if at every point the timing has been just right.

### *Crisis*

We know now that Archer was wrong when he identified action with crisis. Crisis belongs to the supporting series of action, not to its informing series at all. An action involves a series of three crises, along with expositions and judgments as well. Wherefore it does hold true that without crisis there can be no action, no play. The fullest exploitation of crisis will prove particularly rewarding inasmuch as it is crisis that informs a play with interest.

A crisis signifies the posing of a problem. A fresh problem and personal to the actor, or perhaps the fresh presentation of an old and deeply personal unsolved problem thus renewed. The posing of a problem nowise personal, say a technical question in mechanics, we do not dignify by labeling a crisis. But the more intimate and vexing the problem may appear as it presents itself, the more precarious its suspension (more critical, we say), the more definite its correlation in interest. A crisis implies a problem to be solved or else. . . . Usually a vague or-else.

After crisis follows sensible exploration of the problem's factors, its exposition, and next a tentative judgment upon it. Crisis represents the initial interval in the process of judgment, judgment the essential process of mind. A valid human problem needs only be stated clearly, emotionally, for other

human minds to follow on from there with ever deepening interest. The more personal and vexatious, and so emotional, the problem and its presentation, the greater the titillation of interest. Crisis is indeed reciprocal to interest. Interest, emotion, crisis: the three terms are correlates.

In a five-dimensioned event, such as is a play, crisis may be of any of four magnitudes. Of atomic magnitude and accordingly swift recurrence, the inevitable long series of crises manifests itself as comic. And so we laugh at him who, any way he turns, continually finds himself in hot water—always provided that the water is not too hot, the recurrent crises severally of infinitesimal magnitude.

To try to get at the why of this: An atomic event, dimensionless, belongs to the subjective unconscious, the emotional. In respect of the actor himself such an event should remain simply the active expression of his unconscious self. In relation to a third-party observer, however, the event will be at once relatively active, observer identifying himself more or less closely with actor in sympathy; more strictly presentative, our third-party observer noting the event as to him objective action; and at the same time it will be relatively representative, the observer reading symbolic meanings, characteristics, into the act of which the actor supposedly remains unaware. In other words, an observer apprehends the dimensionless event by ingesting it into his own unconscious as active emotion, into his subconscious as presentation, and into his consciousness as representation, all alike indifferently. What definite attitude he shall take toward that event, the particular manner in which he will persistently view it, will depend upon the manner in which said event enters into series with other similar events, the nature of that series. The order of the series of atomic events sets the key for the particular manner of our apprehension of all such events, together with the vaster events that they unfold. At the very start the ob-



server is likely to find himself uncertain, but as the same series recurs again and again the special attitude called forth becomes relatively fixed. Without further reserve the observer permits himself to participate in sympathy with the actor in his problem, or he cheers the actor on to surmount his difficulties, or sits in merciless judgment upon the actor, his problem and the expedient shifts—trial and error measures by which he seeks to sidestep his problem or bring it to some sort of solution. Sitting in judgment, godlike, the observer laughs, and this is the attitude of comedy. The more complicated the problem becomes with each successive essay at solution, the more swiftly it presents fresh and ever more vexatious facets, the broader the comic appeal.

It will be noted that comedy calls forth an attitude from which the observer persistently views the atomic scene as presentation, relatively objective, to him impersonal, each sequence of scenes integrating a representation, a judgment, likewise relatively impersonal. Judgment is nowise a condition of comedy, rather its function, but impersonality is its prime condition, merciless. And particularly merciless are apt to be judgments of little magnitude, swift emotional reactions, as for instance, the reactions of a mob. The mob laughs and hoots while making mock of the object of its adverse swift judgment, by riding him on a rail, ducking in a pond, pelting with overripe eggs or vegetables, stripping him of his clothes and his dignity. In each event as the victim's problem becomes more sore, a further judgment and fresh uproarious laughter. But disrespect while primitive, is not a simple emotion. It is compounded of a sense of the absurd together with a sense of fear. The most primitive, most pervasive of all emotions is fear. Not till fear is disciplined, this the significant function of culture, does unalloyed comedy arise. Whereupon our swifter judgments, merciless still, can concern themselves

with the absurd alone. They become then the gateway through which we sally forth in merry quest after that ultimate consistency which we call truth.

All of which is more about comedy and mob psychology than it is about crisis. The digression was by way of pointing out how it happens that atomic crises, swift recurring, inevitably spell out comedy. On the other hand, crises developed to a two-dimensioned magnitude present themselves as dramatic. Developed to three dimensions they are of the order of tragedy.

A dramatic crisis is one in which action, or better say episode, furnishes the atom, such atoms merging rhythmically into series after series of minor presentations or moods, the moments of crisis affording the more deeply emotional, and hence more vivid and dramatic of the moods. A two-dimensioned event belongs more or less to the actor's subconscious, he feels it; his percept of it emotional in the main. A third-party observer, however, can only regard it in full consciousness; nevertheless to him it still remains tinged with emotion. The dramatic crisis represents typically a general mood calling for a particular judgment, although in practice there is bound to be a progressive unfolding of the particular into the general, the general into the universal, and so on cyclically back to the particular. In any fully developed show drama nine such recurrent, two-dimensioned crises will appear.

A three-dimensioned crisis belongs to tragedy. The presentation which any crisis will be, has here been merged of a series of motivated episodes, that is to say, minor actions themselves developed of a series of minor judgments. A crisis of such magnitude recurs but three times in the course of a five-dimensioned tragedy, initial interval as it is in each of the three major divisions of an action. Through action the problem posed recurrently in the short series of tragic

crises is resolved in a critical final judgment. Thus a tragic crisis proves momentous, to such a degree that when we employ the term crisis our reference is in general to a tragic crisis. Notwithstanding, crisis remains no more specifically a tragic than a comic element or element of drama.

Expanded into four dimensions a crisis presents itself to us again as comic. Such a crisis becomes a crisis of the conscious judgment to initiate a general judgment. Within the limits of a five-dimensioned stage play there is no space for a four-dimensioned crisis to issue further into action. It must remain actively inconsequential, of intellectual consequence alone. And right here we might presume to venture a final definition of comedy as: whatever disciplined exercise of the conscious judgment leaves off short of purposed action. That this obviously includes most if not all of man's metaphysical speculations does not affect our definition in the least; metaphysics of no active consequence remains the height of comedy—the pragmatist would be inclined to say, of folly. Nevertheless philosophy well fulfills its function, that of a needed discipline, a special discipline within that wide-embracing body of discipline which we call culture. The purposed comedian has need to be a philosopher, the philosopher can well fortify himself with a sense of humor; for they are enlisted to serve under one and the same banner side by side, the lofty banner of truth. Not a sword but the pen is their weapon—and two inkpots, one of vitriol, to dip their pens in as occasion warrants. Mighty warriors, both!

But to return again to our crises. Magnitude does not afford the only distinction between them; there are characteristic differences as well. A crisis may be relatively universal, or it may be particular, or it may be general. A general crisis will be found to be most informed by the more general member of its constituent series, its occasion. While any crisis will prove to be an initiation, initiation becomes the outstanding

character of a general crisis, freshness of occasion. A universal crisis, on the other hand, is best expressed in the more universal member of its integrating series, its tension; a particular crisis takes on the color of its particular constituent, suspension. These distinctions are not of signal importance to the playwright in his treatment of crises of such magnitude as gives him opportunity to elaborate the constituent elements individually; but in his treatment of a succession of minor crises the point acquires real significance. A minor general crisis wants to be handled as if it were an occasion and little more. A minor universal crisis as if specifically a tension. Suspense is the essence of a minor particular crisis. Wherefore we employ the term crisis only to designate the initial interval in the major series of comedy, a judgment series, all other critical intervals, whether of comedy, tragedy or drama, being listed as occasion, tension, or else suspension, according as they are relative and general in character, subjective and universal, or objective and particular. This in order to prompt the young playwright how best to handle each and every division of his play, provide a sound timing schedule.

For the same good reason we regularly employ the terms attitude, sensation, or presentation in place of exposition, depending on the special character of the expository interval. And also desire, obstacle or composition, rather than judgment, for the final interval in the series.

This should sufficiently explain the terminology used on the diagram charts for Comedy, Tragedy and Drama offered on pages 110-115. Refer to them.

### *Occasion*

The exploitation of crisis becomes a matter of the sound development of its members, its occasion, tension, suspen-



sion. To make the most of crisis it is needed to make the most of these elements. So let us consider them severally and in detail. First of all, occasion.

Along with the other elements of crisis, and the elements of exposition and judgment no less, an occasion proves under scrutiny to be always a more or less distinct episode. It consists in an unexpected opening up of a new direction to the course of events; as for example in many a time-honored play, the finding of the misplaced will. The will does not make the occasion, nor yet will the terms of the will; these may well belong to presentation later, or perhaps to composition; or if completely unanticipated its terms could be calculated to unfold the tension, the sensation, or maybe the obstacle; but for such subsequent developments it remains the *finding* of the will, an act, an episode, that supplies the fresh occasion.

The unexpected reveals itself as the characteristic factor in that episode which is occasion. Unless there be some element of the unexpected, there can develop no new occasion. For each occasion the playwright is under obligation to manage a surprise, a new and unexpected turn, which shall in its turn give a further new and unexpected turn to the major course of events.

But yet the new occasion has to be rendered believable at peril otherwise of rendering unbelievable the whole further course of events. To see is to believe, provided only that what one sees can be believed. Drama, a presentation to be seen and heard, hinges on belief. The ancient principle called attention to by Aristotle, that the plausible-impossible is ever to be preferred to the possible-implausible, has reference especially to drama's occasions. Granted the occasions, the tensions, suspensions and so on, that progressively follow are sure to seem inevitable. For a seriously intended play the playwright will be wise to choose occasions that are not

only highly plausible but no less possible; but yet in any case it becomes his obligation to render his occasions plausible.

There should be no serious difficulty entailed in this. All that is needed is careful preparation. Every fresh occasion requires to be prepared for in advance. It wants to be prepared for without being discounted lest its flavor be thereby staled. An audience will swallow anything, even the supernatural, to most minds patently impossible, if it has been properly led to expect it; the point is that presentation of the prepared-for circumstance, if it is to serve as an occasion, has to be sprung in a manner unexpected. The drama's indirection permits of this. The several processes chosen to develop the major course of events will interrupt each other rhythmically, every interruption of fresh event upon temporarily fulfilled judgment providing a fresh occasion. If the patently impossible be part and parcel of the chosen action process it must first be expressed in the special mood of that play, after which it can be made to enter unexpectedly and at the same time plausibly, into every new occasion. This is not to say that every incidence of the patently impossible, say the supernatural, in such a play has to be an occasion, not at all; manifestations of the supernatural can just as well furnish the tension, the sensation, the obstacle, or even final judgment; only as an episode holds that which gives a fresh and unexpected twist to the subsequent course of events does it become an occasion; but if introduced as an active element within a play the supernatural is bound to manifest itself in the occasions, although possibly elsewhere too. Handled properly, prepared for in advance, the impossible is made plausible enough for all purposes.

Technically, an occasion is a critical interval, one relatively reciprocal and general. As a critical interval it is necessarily initiatory of a fresh emergent series whose dra-

matic sequence pattern, due to the ever-governing principle of indirection, turns out to be: occasion +, sensation ○, composition —, in other words, a presentation. Here the sensation will have much the effect of a tension, the composition of a suspension, but yet there remain subtle differences. Anyhow there are other spots in the sequence scheme, entailed by the drama's indirection, where the critical intervals of tension and suspension specifically manifest themselves. But we shall be coming to tension and suspension shortly.

Tragic occasions, dramatic occasions and comic occasions, are three essentially different sorts of event. Comedy exercises a certain civilized restraint to stop short of sustained action. Hence it remains actively inconsequential, its occasions occasioning for the most part logical consequences alone. In comedy the unexpected gets translated to the realm of idea so that paradox abounds. The comic scene will be rife with unexpected turns of phrase, unlooked for appositions of idea. The nature of its occasions supplies the characteristic note of comedy.

Bernard Shaw was master of the comic occasion. His practice was in any play to introduce at least one character whose point of view revealed the most unexpected facets. Unfortunately this character and his paradoxical viewpoint were not always rendered quite believable, as is little less the obligation of the playwright in his treatment of the unexpected. In his *Pygmalion*, in many respects the best thing he ever did, Shaw gives us two such characters, Eliza Doolittle and her father the dustman. But Eliza presents the more profoundly comic character by far, since although her point of view is commonplace enough besides the dustman's, once granted the circumstances set forth in the initial episode, the comedy's one reasonably active occasion from which all else follows logically, she is rendered at every point completely believable. It wants to be pointed out that the things she does

and says, the incongruity of her gutter ideas expressed in the developing diction and manner of a duchess, remain actively inconsequential while packed in every phrase with dynamite. Here is comedy of the highest order: plausibility, revealing irrelevance, startling unexpectedness, active in-consequence.

Of special significance in the atomic makeup of comedy, occasions achieve their utmost active import in the show drama. A melodrama, spectacle or farce, presents us with one four-dimensioned occasion, the entire opening act, which gives occasion to the two subsequent acts or actions. There are one three-dimensioned, three two-dimensioned, nine atomic occasions besides. Given the occasions of a melodrama, a spectacle or farce, one may be said to have its outline plot; all else is merest detail.

A tragedy holds but three pertinent occasions in addition to its opening presentation which tells what the action is to be about. No more than three opportunities for introduction of the unexpected. In contrast to a farce or melodrama in both of which unexpected chance is called on to play a stellar role, tragedy deals altogether with active consequences—quite as comedy exposes ideological consequences. But still it does not want to be assumed that the unexpected as a principle is beneath the tragic playwright's notice; the death scene of Othello testifies to the dramatic if not tragic effectiveness of fulfilling even the inevitable in a manner unexpected.

### *Tension*

Tension is the active interval of crisis. Nearly all that we have had to say about crisis applies, if more narrowly, to tension. It represents the swift reaction to occasion, its active antithesis. The term itself implies a progressive stretching.



In occasion the trend of the interest was lateral, an uncovering of fresh correlated circumstance; its direction swings with tension abruptly forward in expectancy. And literally during moments of a play's mounting tensions an audience is observed to stretch forward sitting in its seats, in appropriate response to the action of the play at such moments straining in hope or fear toward what is like to happen. Tensions are prophetic; whether cheaply or profoundly so, is up to the genius of the playwright to produce.

The seeds of tension are to be looked for in the unstable composition obtaining between pre-established desire and obstacle. In the case of the first tension of any play this would refer to an implicit universal human desire in general composition with a particular obstacle, that obstacle shadowed forth in the opening occasion. The fresh occasion serves to reopen and dimly light the issue between desire and obstacle—it proves an occasion only as it does just this. So now desire lifts its head again in hope, obstacle its head in threat. The correlation of desire and obstacle within the immediate context is an emotional one; sensible examination will follow shortly, after which rational reexamination wherein both obstacle and desire can be redefined and composed again under a fresher judgment. Meanwhile the moment of groping toward awareness through instinctive, characteristic forward action, a moment of mounting emotion, is what we mean when we speak of a dramatic tension.

Psychologically, tensions belong to the subconscious; as such they elude definition. They are translated to the plane of representation, which is to say third-party consciousnesses, in the drama, but still as emotional moments they are more readily sensed than explained. They are intuited directly by each and all respondents; in moments taut with tension the empathy of an audience is to be claimed. Thus they provide the playwright's opportunity.

Second or middle in its psychic series, that series which integrates a crisis, tension represents the critical interval, as such initiatory, in its dramatic series wherein innate desire, subconscious, translates itself successively into conscious wish, wish into will, will into activating purpose. This dramatic series, in accordance with the principle of indirection, takes the form of: tension ○, presentation —, desire +. Needless to say, tension imparts its emotion to the entire series.

The significant thing about tensions, considered objectively, is their prophetic quality. Here are the moments for the timing of portents. Not an introduction of anything new, introduction of any fresh active element belongs strictly to occasion; but here an underscoring. A bell ringing that has rung before, the refrain of a song that had earlier been sung, will reecho at such moments with overtones of meaning. Employment of symbols such as these, if done with restraint, can be counted on to point up and heighten the tensions of a play, make them memorable. But it wants to be remembered at the same time that a symbol remains a device, and there should be no overdependence on such devices or the effect is likely to be that the play seems artificial, machine-made.

One further note of warning: no tension durst be out of keeping with its occasion. Raised to a pitch unwarranted by the circumstances, practice of "ham" actor and over-ambitious playwright alike, the swift effect is burlesque and the audience laughs at, not bates its breath with, the offender against good taste.

Prophetic, forward reaching, tension only admits of being measured in terms of itself, intensity, and not at all in quantitative terms. It reaches its highest pitch of intensification in tragedy, of which play form it remains peculiarly characteristic.

## *Suspension*

The state of tension, active, subjective, universal, is followed psychically by suspension, passive, objective, particular, yet the mood persists much the same: uncertainty as to outcome. Indeed, within the vaster interval of crisis a suspension might be pertinently defined as the question mark upon a problem newly posed. But whereas the direction of tension was forward in anticipation, suspension ever looks back in fear, dread of the as yet unclearly defined ancient obstacle. Be it remembered that fear persists as the dominant emotion of the human heart.

Suspension is the critical interval characteristic of the show drama, quite as occasions are prescriptive of comedy, tension rather of tragedy. The dramatic way to handle any situation is to endow it with suspense.

The dramatic series which suspension as critical interval initiates is: suspension —, attitude +, obstacle ○. This is, of course, an action series: suspension expository of conditions precedent, attitude of the cause, before coming to grips with the obstacle in some measure, somehow, as climax to the episode.

This is about all we have to say about suspension at this time.

## *Exposition*

The formula for the nineteenth century "well-made" play called for an initial exposition followed by a rising action that should reach a crescendo in an explosive climax, after which the prescription was to ring in as sharply as might be a satisfying denouement. The playwright worked to and from his climax. The first curtain went up on a parlor maid, or perhaps the family butler, reciting at length to all and

sundry, more particularly some visitor dragged in for the occasion or else another servant, the many and involved circumstances belonging to the conditions of the action, the express and detailed showing of which could thus be done away with inasmuch as they were told about instead. To crowd all such information to an audience, confusing if perhaps necessary information, into the first scene or two of the play was at that time considered good technique. Such artificial, talky, narrative scenes were thereupon labeled exposition.

Only it happens that this was badly conceived exposition. Narrative is scarcely exposition. Exposition implies the process of exposing, demonstrating, showing to the point of recognition; what is merely told about and not shown little deserves the name of exposition. But misuse of the term still persists.

Commonest fault of the dramatic novice is an inept handling of his exposition. He has been told that exposition is not action, that it is dull and tiresome to an audience, a necessary evil, and to get it over with as quickly as possible so as to get on with his story. Which is nonsense. True, exposition is not action; but action—dramatic action, action seen and heard and made understandable—is exposition. In a broad sense every moment of every play belongs to exposition; when exposition is over the play is over. Exposition can not be crowded into a few early scenes, and then forgotten. In even its narrowest sense exposition must recur rhythmically, cyclically, throughout the play to render current action clear. It has to be timed for clearness.

A first principle of the drama is that nothing pertinent to the story or the theme wants to be told about, narrated, if with reasonable economy it can be shown. The screen possesses a distinct advantage over the stage in this respect; swift cutting, instant change of scene, renders completest exposi-



tion possible without expense of time or dependence on narrative at all. But what pertinent circumstances the economy of the stage forbids the showing of, so that they can only be left to narrative, these still want to be narrated at the proper time, the moment of their relevance, and not before. The crowding of detail before circumstance renders it relevant can only confuse. Timed right, however, even narrative, if it be enlightening and not too involved, may be counted on to hold the interest of an audience.

Exposition signifies, in respect to the observer, a presentative representation. It completes sensory presentation, prepares this for the mind of an audience to digest in judgment. A third-party action, observed, is to us presentation, as for instance, men operating a steam shovel to scoop out an excavation; as such it is dramatic so that we "sidewalk superintendents" are prone to stand and watch; but still unrelated to other actions or to an idea it remains meaningless, mere fact. It is not yet exposition.

A further example: Should we lift our eyes from the task before us at our desk to glance out the window, and so chance to see a taxi turn to the curb before the bank building opposite, we should scarcely give it a second thought. It would be commonplace, a meaningless fact. But if out sprang three men waving tommy guns, two of them to scurry up the steps and into the bank while the third stationed himself on guard outside, we should be startled into sudden awareness that something was afoot. And when a moment later the two who had entered the bank returned "hot foot" and the three men crowded back into the taxi to speed away, we should recognize that a hold up, or at least an attempted hold up, had taken place. Each incident in this series was to us a sensory presentation: the whole series becomes a more or less complete and orderly presentation as in our minds we relate what we have just now observed to what we had previously read

and heard about bank hold ups: on the instant our minds translate the event into the representation of such a hold up. And depending upon what may have gone before and what comes after, it will prove to us a crisis, an exposition, or perhaps a judgment.

It must prove a crisis should it happen, say, that we recognized one of the gun men for a blood brother. In such case the emotional connotations of the affair, for us, should outweigh all else and be very sure to initiate a chain of further events that must end up in a painful judgment, if it goes no farther. On the other hand, did it happen that we were able to recognize in the features of that gun man, not an intimate of ours but instead, the now familiar face of the prisoner at the bar in a criminal case on which we had recently served as juror; ourselves largely responsible for his present freedom of action since it was we who had held out stubbornly for acquittal against the evidence and the testimony of the police, because we conceived that he had an honest face—such things do happen!—then the immediate event must strike home upon us as a judgment. In such case the event relates itself, for us, to prior events, rounding out a whole series of events to integrate that series into one more vast and significant event. But if, as more likely in every-day life, we fail to recognize any of the men involved, have previous acquaintance with none of them nor own any special interest in the affairs of that bank, then the event should relate itself merely to our previous ideas regarding bank hold ups, our attitude toward such things: here demonstrated before our eyes was the way the thing is done. Thus integrated the event sums up for us as an exposition.

All of which goes to demonstrate that there is little inherent difference in the raw substance of events. It is the way that events relate themselves into series with other events that establishes their character. The same event may prove to one

observer an exposition, to another a crisis, to a third a judgment, all depending on what for the individual observer went before and is to come after. In the drama, of course, the playwright is able to control what the entire series of events shall be so that each least event may be expected to signify much the same to every member of his audience. But he is then under double obligation to exercise such control. He needs to link his events up into closely related series, time his sequences for relevance.

Demonstrated too is that exposition can be handled and deserves to be handled quite as crisply as crisis. Indeed, good exposition calls for better constructive thought than does crisis, since the important crises will come to mind with the first appropriation of story, while the contributory happenings to round out and explain the more critical events require to be invented. But even more important than the quality of the invention that goes into good exposition is sure timing. Let it be remembered that exposition follows on and does not anticipate crisis. It should follow on directly. It wants to be of the selfsame magnitude.

An atomic crisis, a critical scene, takes after it an atomic exposition, a brief expository scene, in preparation for a similarly insignificant judgment. This is the way of life and the method of drama. A briefly developed crisis posing a problem, to be followed by a lengthy exposition, is the exhaustive method of science; it would be found altogether pointless on the stage. Nor can a vaster built-up crisis be satisfactorily resolved for judgment by an atomic exposition. This is the peculiar method employed by an inferior school of murder-mystery concoctors—the better ones know better—and on the stage it does not work at all. For while it may hold its audience breathless for two acts and over, in the end it lets everyone down with a sense of their interest having been trifled with.

Minor expositions, similarly to minor crises, are found most informed by that integrating member whose character agrees with the character of the event. Thus a general exposition proves in effect to be the presentation of an attitude or attitudes; a universal exposition approximates a sensation; a particular exposition means specifically a presentation.

### *Attitude*

Attitude is the median point for all cognition. In life one takes away in knowledge from any experience little more than he brings of past experience to that experience. The mind labors like the ant, one tiniest grain at a time, in the heaping up of knowledge. Past experience establishes, generally, an emotional position from which each new experience is met, the attitude towards the experience; and more than any other factor this attitude then colors the particular experience of the new experience. To meet an experience with interest is to experience interest in the experience.

What we call the human personality is little more than a general attitude summing up a unique and individual past experience. (The little more is general desire, and we shall be coming to that before long.) Instinctively we rate the people we meet according to the attitudes they demonstrate under this circumstance and that—we only get at the general through the particular. Particular attitudes may be feigned; we are all inclined to court the good opinions of our fellows by feigning on occasion attitudes not particularly our own. Such practice is innocent enough when innocent, expression as it is of a generally agreeable personality; when we believe we can discern design behind the practice we rate the offending party a hypocrite. The point is that in attitude, the



general behind the particular, we feel assured that the very person himself stands revealed.

What is true of life holds for the drama. The playwright's attitude toward his story gets reflected in his theme, the position from which he consistently views the events of his story. He chooses characters to develop his theme for the very pertinence of their several attitudes revolving about that theme. His play will unfold little more of meaning than is contained in his theme. To say as has often been said, that an author ought to keep himself out of his play, is folly. He couldn't do so if he would; he is right at the heart of it in its theme, *his* theme. What he is under obligation to do is, try to keep himself out of his individual characters' attitudes, their revealed personalities, present these objectively. Whereupon he durst exact fullest compensation by having his cast complete enter complete into his attitude, his and the play's theme. Happy the play, the playwright, and the audience, when this happens.

Attitude as an interval of time and timing belongs to the cognition series. It initiates sensory presentation, **exposition**. An episode, its function in the drama is to reveal in action—dramatically—the positions of the various characters toward the issues of the larger action in process, positions widely divergent, personalities in contrast. It will contribute nothing to the progress of the forward action, its own direction regressive looking to past experience, the sum of diverse attitudes patently digressive; but by this very token it is to be recognized as adding a fresh extension of magnitude to the larger action.

Explicit attitudes contribute digressive extension to the play complete, implicit attitude to the atomic scene. As sub-atomic element it manifests itself in dialogue. Every word, phrase, line and gesture, each reaction and action of every

character, ought to reveal attitude, or as more commonly put, "be in character." And particularly is this true of comedy in which the atomic scene represents a mood, a minor presentation, the cognition series which attitude initiates the series of its normal structure. The full flavor of comedy develops out of pertinently irrelevant attitudes. For the show drama attitudes must be held constant—unless for a possible relenting of the stern parent or a similar convenient conversion near the close—no opportunity is afforded in the structure of the show drama to probe behind attitude, so that it is by the constancy of their attitudes that dramatic characters identify themselves. In tragedy attitudes are slowly built up, and once built are nowise to be changed; but for comedy nimble change of attitude is quite in order. Revealing as it may a deeper underlying attitude in hiding beneath assumed surface attitudes, truth behind appearance, nimble change of attitude is inherently comic. And so we delight in the minx who poses successively as high brow, low brow, wild prodigal, economical homebody, demure vestal, enigmatic siren, all according to her estimate of the fancy of the male who takes her in to dinner. Beneath such infinite variety we trust to read a constant single attitude, and this flatters our judgment, pleases us. Exaggeration of attitude is always comic. Even its marked stressing to underscore contrasts develops the lateral, the comic extension.

Belonging to character and little if at all to overt action, the intervals of attitude durst not be made as arresting as those episodes which further the progressive action of the story. Attitude is generally quiet, although fittingly to reveal a turbulent character may call for a somewhat boisterous episode. But yet everything must be held in key: if attitude needs be made explosive, then the more active episodes of tension, sensation and obstacle, want to be rendered that much more so.

## *Sensation*

Sensation is the action interval in the series of sense-perception, the cognition series; it acquires the added meaning of salient event, objective to the observer, essentially dramatic. Our reference is to this dramatic sense of the term when we speak of an event as "sensational."

In strict sense-perception sensation is the second in the series following directly on attitude; but in life and in the drama, due to the controlling principle of indirection, while still second in its series, it follows rather on occasion.

## *Presentation*

Presentation, passive, objective and particular, is the final in the cognition series, sensory-objective. But while final in the cognition series it becomes second or middle interval in its dramatic series, following on tension, due to the principle of indirection.

The prime function of drama is to show, to present; thus presentation represents its characteristic interval; and particularly is this true of the show drama. And yet, passive and objective, there is little to be said about it—except that since every least unit of time owns magnitude, something of action and judgment along with presentation, even the most particularly presentative of scenes can be made and should be made, and if timed just right is sure to be, alive with interest to an audience.

## *Complication—The Three Judgments*

Complication is the term we apply to the final interval of the representation or judgment series. This interval is merged of three lesser rational presentation moments: desire +, obstacle ○, and composition —.

It needs to be understood beforehand that there are three successive and distinct planes of judgment. At bottom the common sense judgment, no more than a rational presentation, particular, offers itself in the final term of the rational presentation series: composition. This common sense judgment faced with any essentially new problem in experience is rarely other than at fault. (After repeated experiences of a similar nature, the conditions of the problem calling for judgment recognized and with a proven general judgment upon it conceptualized and ready, it usually is fairly sound—thus we are said to learn from experience.) The cyclically expanded general judgment too, referred to as reasoned, is most often found eventually at fault as well. This general judgment gets voiced in the general interval of judgment, naturally, that interval following on exposition and merged of the three lesser rational presentation intervals of desire +, obstacle ○, composition —; but more particularly does it receive expression in the general interval of the series, desire +. (Which ought to establish how biased and at fault generally the human reason and its judgments are apt to be.) As a result of extended painful action, trial and error, a genuinely sound proven ethical judgment is finally arrived at, the critical judgment we call it, universal. It is evidenced in the drama in tragedy alone, in the final overcoming of the universal obstacle, to which interval it is timed to provide the katharsis. Meanwhile every lesser judgment, whether merely inadequate or altogether false, entails misdirected action, thus serving as a complication.

From which it should be clear that a complication means a false or inadequate judgment, judgment the general approach to action. The consequence of misdirected action, and so of a false or inadequate judgment, is necessarily further painful action. When in any representation of life, particularly such as may be presented on the stage, the judgment



process itself is played up, consequent action together with its pain played down, we laugh in our superior god-like reviewing judgment to dub the presentation a comedy. Or when the consequences in frustration and pain are turned upon the counter-actors, "villains," while the sympathetic hero learns to correct his judgments and so triumph, we applaud the presentation noisily as show drama. But if the judgment prove no misjudgment whereas demonstrated through painful action to be, although perhaps neither particularly nor yet generally so, nonetheless universally true indeed, we shed a tear in sympathy for the sufferings of the noble protagonist, so like ourselves—unless that we in our worldly wisdom refuse to protagonize other than vicariously—and name the play a tragedy.

We may judge from this that endlessly recurring complications of slight magnitude, vexing while shallow, not too seriously painful, serve as the breath of life to comedy. Deeper complications, less abounding, of somewhat greater magnitude, threatening, but whose threat is to be turned aside through corrected judgment and heroic action, the consequent pain and frustration visited instead upon the villain or villains of the piece—such complications bespeak the show drama. Whereas the most profound of complications, nowise to be turned aside, three-dimensioned to recur but twice in the course of a unit action, spells out tragedy, painful indeed. On the other hand, the tragic judgment, uncompromisingly ethical to gainsay both expedient common sense and tergiversating reason, like Job, gets vindicated in the end, the explication or katharsis.

The incidence of complication, indeed the timing of any and every interval in a play, is to be recognized as a function of the basic structure of that play, its type, whether tragedy, drama or comedy.

## *Desire*

Desire is the initial interval in the series of rational presentation; it becomes the final in its dramatic series where—in subconscious desire is in process of sublimation into conscious will or purpose.

Desire represents an innate personal bias. In this it is much like attitude. But whereas attitude represents a bias for or against particular persons, for or against particular circumstances, desire operates more generally in the direction of eventuality. It is concerned with ideas, if only subconsciously so. Within the two intervals of attitude and desire the human personality expresses itself.

## *Obstacle*

If personality is expressed in the intervals of desire and attitude, character reveals itself rather under stress, the action intervals of tension and obstacle.

Obstacle is the second or middle interval in the series of rational presentation; culminating interval, however, in its dramatic series, an action series, be it noted. It presents what is to be fought against, together with a blow by blow running account of that fight. In tragedy the catastrophe, so-called, is timed to the final interval of obstacle.

## *Composition*

A composition is always more or less the presentation of a minor complication. It is final, both in the rational presentation series initiated by desire, and in its dramatic series initiated by occasion. Thus in any event it becomes colored either by occasion or desire—which is why in sum it must represent a complication.























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